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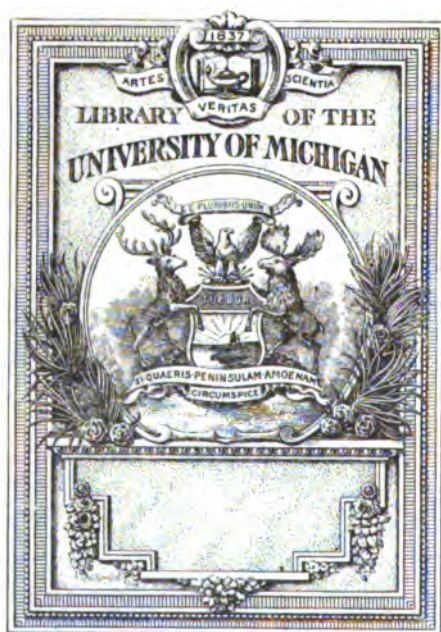
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POSTHUMOUS WORKS
OF
FREDERIC II.
KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. XII.



1435-1

CORRESPONDENCE



L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

A N D

MESS. D'ALEMBERT, DE CONDORCET,
GRIMM AND D'ARGET.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

B Y

T H O M A S H O L C R O F T.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR

G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
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L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

AND

M. D'ALEMBERT.

L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

AND

M. D'A L E M B E R T.

L E T T E R CXXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, August 13, 1775.

M. DE VOLTAIRE, penetrated with gratitude for your majesty's bounty toward M. d'Etallonde Morival, informs me, by letter, of the favour you have granted this young man, who is so cruelly and absurdly persecuted by the fanatics of Gaul. The protection you grant to M. d'Etallonde is worthy of the genius and soul of your majesty, and will be an eternal dis-

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B

grace

grace to the barbarians who have not blushed to condemn him to lose his head, for not having saluted a procession of capuchins. M. de Voltaire, and all who have seen this young man at Ferney, affirm he is highly worthy of your majesty's favour, from the dignity of his sentiments, the gentleness of his character and manners, and his assiduity in the search of knowledge. I hope M. d'Etallonde, by the use he will make of this knowledge, and of his talents, in your majesty's service, will repay the kindness and protection with which he has been honoured. Permit me to request a continuation of this kindness, in behalf of a young man who was the innocent victim of the most atrocious and the most frantic superstition. Cæsar must redress the follies of the Druids, and of their agents. It is for him at once to afford examples to his age of war, peace, philosophy, humanity and justice. Let my feeble voice, therefore, pay the very humble thanks of all good and enlightened men, for what you have done in favour of this youth ; and for the opprobrium with which you have thus covered superstition, and fanaticism.

I am, with the most profound respect, the warmest admiration, and sincerest gratitude, &c.

L E T-

LETTER CXXXIV.

From the King.

September 9, 1775.

IT seems that philosophy as well as religion is to have its martyrs. Divus Etallondus will soon arrive here, patronised by you and Voltaire; and I will endeavour to fix his fortune in this world, till the period at which, that is after his death, he shall perform miracles. It is said you Frenchmen begin to pronounce the word toleration without horror; but you begin a little too late. In the age of Louis XIV. the word was not admitted into the theological vocabulary of his confessor. Malesherbes and Turgot are to do wonders; they are to be the apostles of Truth, who will easily overthrow Error, but who will have great obstacles to overcome, rising from the prejudices of education. You know, when we are very good Christians, we are seldom at the same time very good logicians; which problem I leave to your algebraic equations, for which no doubt they will afford a solution.

Two of your young countrymen have been in Silesia; M. de Laval Montmorency, and M.

de Clermont Gallerande. I have commissioned them both to pay you a thousand compliments on my part. They are amiable men. Clermont has wit, and I believe some knowledge ; but of this my discretion would not suffer me to enquire too minutely.

But, my dear D'Alembert, though you could not visit us this year, can you not come the next? Do not you know that I am old, and that, if I do not meet you again in this world, I have to no purpose appointed a rendezvous in the valley of Jehosaphat? Believe me, there is no time to lose; let us execute our intentions while we have the power, or they will never be executed. I cannot come into France, but you may, with permission, come hither, without giving your academies cause of complaint. How many perpetual secretaries have occasionally absented themselves! Beside, I imagine the air of this country would be very good for your health, and my wishes are to see you, before I die, and to assure you of my esteem.

On which I pray, &c.

. L E T .

L E T T E R CXXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, September 15, 1775,

SOME time since I had the honour to write a letter to your majesty, in favour of M. d'Etallonde Morival; and, in the name of justice and humanity, to return you thanks for your kindness to this young man, of which, by his politeness, application, and zeal for your service, he is truly worthy. All who have seen him are unanimous in his praise, and regard the protection which you have been pleased on this occasion to grant innocence and reason, persecuted by absurd and atrocious fanaticism, as one of your majesty's finest actions; and a new anecdote to add to your history, which already abounds with the great and the glorious.

I am most grateful for the bounty with which you have been pleased to receive lord Dalrymple, whose name is almost as difficult to write as to pronounce; but who has not deceived me in the idea he has inspired your majesty with of himself. To those amiable manners to which the French, right or wrong, lay claim, he adds that maturity of understanding to which, unfortunately, they

do not lay claim, I greatly envy him the happiness he has enjoyed of approaching your majesty, and am very desirous once more to enjoy this happiness myself, before I again render up my body to the elements, by which it will soon be re-demanded ; but I am so little certain of my health, and to fall ill on a journey would render me so wretched, that I dare not undertake to travel to places much less distant than Berlin ; as for example to Holland, which I should have a great desire to see, were it not for my fears. Yet I am, generally speaking, somewhat less dissatisfied with my existence, and whenever I think I can confide in my strength, I will, if possible, drag my body to the feet of your majesty, there to deposit my last and most ardent expressions of those sentiments which are so justly and so devotedly yours.

Our young monarch continues to love worthy men, and grant them his confidence ; and to do good both by himself and by his ministers. There is scarcely a day on which some vexation is not abolished ; yet the mountain was so enormous that it does not appear to be lessened. It must be the work of time ; we therefore offer up our prayers for the preservation of the king. It is said, however, that the priests have sworn to impede the progress of good with their whole force ;

force ; to effect which benign work they propose to join the parliaments. Thanks to the virtuous magistrates who are in the council, these iniquitous projects will not be accomplished.

Your majesty has rightly judged Le Kain; at least if I may depend on my little knowledge and mathematical severity. There are moments in which he is the actor of nature, but at other times his tediousness renders his performance wearisome and monotonous. I wish your majesty had seen mademoiselle Clarion play. She had no such defect, and I am almost certain she would have pleased you.

Some days since I sent your majesty, by the Strasburg coach, a copy of the catalogue of the late M. Mariette, a very well-informed and curious amateur, who had a fine collection of prints and drawings. The sale will begin in two months, and perhaps your majesty would wish to be a purchaser, which has induced his heirs to desire I would send you this ample and curious catalogue.

M. Taffart must at present be initiated in your majesty's service, and I flatter myself you will be satisfied with his work, and his behaviour.

In addition to my letter, I have only to renew my wishes for your majesty's preservation, happiness, and glory ; and that you may suffer your

people, and consequently Europe, permanently to enjoy the fruits of gentle peace; that you may long remain the protector of the sciences, arts, philosophy, and letters, and that you may continue to promote their progress by your own intelligent, graceful, and nervous writings! Unable to do more than follow you at a distance, I still shall keep my eyes fixed on your flight, and shall not fail to applaud your splendour.

I am, with the most profound respect, the liveliest gratitude, &c,

L E T T E R CXXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, October 3, 1775.

IT is but a short time since I did myself the honour to write to your majesty, and one of my greatest fears is lest I should importune you by my too frequent letters, and rob you of time which is to you so precious. But the kind letter I received requires, on my part, new expressions of that gratitude and veneration which, for so many reasons, I am indebted to you. Your majesty, by honouring the unfortunate and interesting d'Etallonde, with your favours, will most
publicly

publicly and worthily avenge innocence, oppressed by fanaticism, priests, and the atrocity of parliaments. They are each as contemptible as the other, as is proved by these same men, who opposed each other with such fury, concerning absurdities, under the late king, and have now entered into an offensive and defensive league, which they have the insolence publicly to announce, in opposition to the royal authority (but which doubtless will not suffer such proceedings) and, if possible, to impede that good which enlightened and virtuous ministers endeavour to effect. I told a person the other day, and I fear I prophesied, that, by expelling the new parliament and recalling the old, we exchanged a stinking for a venomous animal.

The priests, who are now holding an assembly, as they unfortunately do every five years, and who, in this assembly, wrangle and abuse each other, are to go in a body to conjure the king to renew the atrocious and absurd edicts which command the persecution of the protestants. This is a part of the oath they made the monarch take at his coronation. I know not whether your majesty has received the printed work, the title of which is—*Formules et Cérémonies pour le Sacre de S. M. Louis XVI.** I wish your

* Forms and Ceremonies for the Coronation of Louis XVI.

occupations, which are indeed too important to suffer interruption by the perusal of such folly, would permit you to cast your eye over this book, which has excited the indignation of all the good and faithful subjects of our young and virtuous monarch. You will there see, page 60, that the priests recommend the new king to the guidance of Heaven, whom, say they, *we have elected* sovereign of this land. How can priests be permitted, in this ridiculous and offensive ceremony, never to mention any thing but themselves, *their* privileges, *their* possessions, and *their* claims, and never to speak of the rights of king or people ! The only consolation of enlightened and faithful patriots is a hope that, during the reign of Louis XVI. to which they wish happiness and continuance, knowledge will make a sufficient progress finally to occasion this absurd and strange ceremony to be wholly laid aside : a ceremony which, though made a pretext by priests, is by no means the object of religion. The marquis Tanucci, a most enlightened man, who apparently is well acquainted with whatever is odious and insolent in the sacerdotal formula for the consecration, has prevented the present king of Naples, whose prime minister he is, from submitting to this kind of humiliation. May we hereafter do the same!

My

My indignation against the priests has carried me so far that I have scarcely left myself room to speak of affairs of greater consequence. It is said that M. Margraff, a very able chemist of your academy, is near his end. Should your majesty not have any person whom you intend as his successor, and should you please to put the same confidence in me on this as on former occasions, I perhaps shall find a proper person; and may have the good fortune to succeed, in this choice as I have done in others, to your majesty's satisfaction.

I have also been informed of the death of M. Heinius, the director of the philosophic class, and imagine that M. Beguelin would most worthily fill his place, from his amenity, labours, and knowledge; for which reason I take the liberty to recommend him to your majesty's bounty.

Why am I denied the pleasure of personally repeating what I am obliged to say by letter? Your majesty has had the kindness to send me new invitations, which excite my gratitude and affection. Why cannot I answer them as I wish? My place of secretary would not prevent me from passing some time with your majesty, and once again laying all those sentiments which have so long been familiar to my heart at your
majesty

majesty's feet. But a feeble state of health, the fear of not being able to endure fatigue, and friends that are dear to me, who are ill, and who have need of my assistance, will not permit me to form any fixed project of the kind. Yet I do not wholly despair of accomplishing my wishes, and of renewing to your majesty those testimonies of veneration with which I shall all my life remain, &c.

L E T T E R CXXXVII.

From the King.

October 23, 1775.

POSIDONIUS may say what he pleases, but the gout is a real physical evil. It has kept all my members in bondage during four weeks, and prevented me from answering your letter, which gave me pleasure, because it gave me to hope I again should see and hear the sage Anaxagoras, before I drink of the waters of Lethe. Take my advice, let us improve the present opportunity, and see each other while we are able. As soon as I know the route you have chosen, I shall act contrary to the practice of priests, who strew the road to Paradise with thorns

thorns and stumbling-blocks, and shall strew yours with roses and garlands. I own that Paradise is not here, and that this is a sandy country; yet do we hold true philosophers in greater estimation than Jews do the cherubim and seraphim.

I congratulate you on the philosophic ministry which the sixteenth Louis has chosen. May he long remain fixed in his choice, in a country where novelty is incessantly called for, and where the scene is ever shifting. Beware lest their reign should be of short duration.

Divus Etallondus is arrived, and we shall prepare a niche for him, as the martyr of philosophy and good sense, in which being placed, we hope he will incessantly work miracles. For example, that he will drive his persecutors completely mad; that he will send fanatics to Bedlam; that he will raise La Barre and Calas from the dead; and that finally he will worthily decorate (with asses ears) the heads of all your paltry doctors of the Sorbonne. Should you perceive any such miracles actually effected at Paris, do not fail to inform me, that they may be inserted in the legend of the saint.

I imagine that the place which you have mentioned in our academy, was disposed of before the arrival of your letter; this however will not prevent

prevent my paying it due deference on the first opportunity. But come yourself, as you have given me to hope; impart life to that academy of which, though absent, you are the soul, and here receive the sincere approbation and marks of friendship of an Obotrite* nation, where more justice is done you than in your own country.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, December 15, 1775; the anniversary of the Battle of Kesselfdorf.

I AM entirely of your majesty's opinion, and not of that of the empyric Posidonius; I think the gout is a great evil, not only to those who suffer it but even to those who interest themselves for the suffering. The violent attack you have sustained has excited in me very serious alarms, even after the last letter I had the honour to receive from you. The worst reports have been current here, and it was only by dint of enquiry that I could in some degree allay my

* The Obotrites were an ancient German people. T. fears.

fears.—Nor shall I be entirely delivered from them, till your majesty shall please to send me intelligence of the present state of your health, so dear to my heart.

I have received a letter from Divus Etallon-dus, as your majesty is pleased to call him, who appears to be deeply penetrated with gratitude for your bounty; he is determined to neglect nothing that may render him worthy of this bounty. I hope his industry, his conduct, and his manners, will prove to your majesty, or rather to the absurd and atrocious fanatics, from whom you have wrested the unfortunate victim, that it is possible for a man, who at the age of eighteen neglected to pay the honours of salutation to a procession of capuchins, in rainy weather, to merit the favours and esteem of a great king.

From the hope which your majesty has been pleased to inspire, to remember the request I presented in favour of M. Beguelin, on some other occasion, I again take the liberty to recommend this estimable man to your kindness, of which I believe him worthy, by the propriety of his behaviour and his assiduity.

I also did myself the honour to offer my services in quest of a successor to M. Margraff, should the academy lose that able chemist. As

I make no exception to persons, when your majesty's service and the good of your academy are in question, I have lately learnt that there is a very able chemist at Stockholm, named M. Scheele, a member of the Academy of Sciences of that city, and who, without being otherwise known to me, appears to be held in great esteem by the most able chemists in France. Your majesty may make enquiries on the subject, and perhaps without difficulty obtain this learned man.

I am also informed that M. Michaelis, of Göttingen, of whom I know nothing except that he is a man very distinguished for his learning, and that twelve years ago your majesty was desirous of inviting him to Berlin, would at present be much disposed to this removal, from some disgust he has received, which diminishes his attachment to Hanover. My zeal alone dictates this information, of which your majesty will make such use as you shall think proper, agreeable to your own wisdom and knowledge.

I some days since received a letter from the marchioness d'Argens, who appears exceedingly afflicted at the dissatisfaction which your majesty has indicated, because the mausoleum to the memory of her husband is erected at Aix, and not at Toulon. She informs me that the bishop of Toulon would not suffer it to be
erected

erected in his diocese, although the manner of the death of the marquis, in which he conformed to all the sacraments of the Romish church, might have calmed the scruples of the most timid. I imagine the widow could not have opposed this arbitrary resistance, without encountering the whole horde of penitents, blue, black, white, red, &c. with whom this country is over-run, and without, in some manner, committing your majesty in squabbles with Provençal priests, who are no better than other priests, and who, thanks to their climate, are still nearer a state of lunacy and folly.

Our bishops have requested the king to declare the children of protestants bastards, and suffer monastic vows to be taken at sixteen. These requests are well worthy of French bishops! The king has replied with prudence, and it is the hope of the nation he will in these points conform to the wishes which all good citizens long have made, that Frenchmen may, without distinction, enjoy the protection of the laws, and that no man be allowed to dispose of his freedom at an age when he is legally incapable of disposing of his estate.

Great military reforms are announced, especially in the household troops, that have hitherto been of vast expence to the nation, and of no

utility. Interested people, who are numerous, begin already loudly to exclaim; but the nation blesses the prince and his minister.

Accept, sire, with your usual kindness, my good wishes for your majesty on the approaching year. May many more be added, and may you long receive that homage of respect, gratitude, and admiration, with which, &c.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

From the King.

December 30, 1775.

I OWN I am not so great a stoic as Posidonius, and I know not whether, had Zeno of Elea like me sustained fourteen successive fits of the gout, he would not have confessed that the gout is a real evil. Whether the body be only the case of the soul, or an organized intelligent machine, it is equally certain that matter prodigiously influences mind, and that pain finally subdues and renders the mind melancholy. Nature has given us sensations; nor can the double refined reasoning of the Portico deprive us of these sensations, unless they could change our nature. My pain has been very great, and
though

though the disease was not dangerous, its duration made it supposed I should begin my march on that road which ends in the gulph of forgetfulness. But my hour was not come, and I still respire, to honour letters, and to applaud those who, like a certain Anaxagoras, distinguish themselves with eclat. Should that sage come hither, his presence will relieve me from all remaining infirmities, and we will converse together on the king of France, his good qualities, the government of philosophers, and the fine hopes which have thence been conceived by the nation of the Gauls.

We are told Voltaire is become a marquis, and at the same time an Intendant of the country of Gex; but I should be better pleased had he no such titles, and at the same time had he no reason to fear a return of apoplexy. Should Europe lose this great genius, literature would be at an end. Men of mediocrity will succeed, and, for want of better, be applauded, and good taste will be entirely lost. This may be foreseen without the gift of prophecy. I who love letters think of their decay with grief. Ages must pass away before nature shall produce another Voltaire. And who knows in what climate she shall scatter such seed? Perhaps in Russia; perhaps on the banks of the Caspian; but of

this we shall not be spectators. I must satisfy myself with the great men I have known; the species has always been rare, in every country and every age. I must return thanks to my good fortune, for having been born at the close of the age of Louis XIV.

I will give you full satisfaction relative to M. Weguelin. Margraff still lives, nor do I think he has any inclination hastily to depart and work in the laboratory of the next world. D'Etalonde is a good lad, and it would have been barbarous cruelty to have broiled him, for omitting to make a bow. Ah, my dear D'Alembert, your *** is a strange creature, and has brought many evils on the human race! Your Gallic priests are greater bigots than those of the holy Roman empire of Germany. Superstition visibly declines in catholic countries; and, should it so continue to decline but a little longer, the monks will abandon their cells, the prejudices of the people will no more find food, and reason will appear in open day, without fear of persecution or of faggots. The zeal of enthusiasm is lost. The numerous good books, that have stript fables which the public regarded as sacred of their absurdity, have also couched the cataraacts which blinded the eyes of prime ministers, that blush at their senseless worship, and silently labour

bour for the downfall of superstition. May Heaven bless their labours !

In revenge, a bishop of Toulon reduces the tomb of the marquis d'Argens to a cenotaph, which the living are obliged to erect, to his memory, at the distance of some leagues from the place in which the body of the poor philosopher reposes. Nothing was wanting to complete the act, but to see this barbarous monk dig up his remains, and cast them to the birds of the air. Yet, while such indignities are committed, men have the effrontery to call the eighteenth century our philosophic age. But, no ; while sovereigns shall wear theological chains, and while those who are paid to pray for shall govern the people, truth, oppressed by these tyrants of the mind, will never enlighten nations ; sages will think only in silence, and the most absurd superstitions will lord it over the empire of the Gauls.

I hope we shall discuss all these subjects together, and that I shall, *viva voce*, be able to assure you of my whole esteem and friendship,

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXL.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, February, 23, 1776.

I KNOW not whether there be any physical sympathy between your majesty and your most unworthy servant, to whom by moral sympathy he is so much attached, but the fourteen fits of the gout, which your majesty has sustained, have been followed, in my person, by a long fit of the rheumatism, which I have successively had in all parts of my feeble body, and which has been totally destructive of the little improvement of which I began to be sensible, in my frail machine. The weather, indeed, for three weeks has been more excessively severe than had before been known in the memory of man. The cold in 1709 was less by one degree; at least, if we can rely on observations which appear to be as accurate as possible. Fortunately the same calamity did not result from the cold of 1776, because the ground was covered with snow; nor have we this year, as in the year 1709, had a partial thaw so totally destructive. But some poor wretches have died with cold and hunger. Our young king, who is bene-

beneficence and justice itself, has saved all of whom he could come to the knowledge, and has set no bounds to his benevolence.

We are assured the cold has been proportionately severe in the north. I much fear that if it has been so at Berlin, your majesty must have greatly suffered from its effects. Let me entreat you kindly to remove these fears; though all that I hear affords me consolation.

It is not true that Voltaire is become a marquis, and Intendant of the country of Gex, as your majesty has been informed. He is no more a marquis and Intendant than he was before. But he has profited by the administration of a virtuous Comptroller-general, zealous for the public good, and has petitioned that the country of Gex, in which he lives, might no longer be devoured by financiers. His petition has been granted. The effects are at once advantageous to both king and people. He is in good health, and, I hope, notwithstanding he is now eighty-two, letters and humanity will not lose him yet. How great, as your majesty well observes, will be the loss! I turn my thoughts from the subject, and when I every morning repeat, as for these two years I have done, *Domine saluum fac regem*, I add a short prayer for another king, whom I will leave you, sire, to

divine, and an *oremus* for the philosopher of Ferney.

Since your majesty is pleased to notice the recommendation I took the liberty to send, in behalf of M. Beguelin, I obtrude so far again as to request your favours for this man of merit, whenever you shall find an opportunity.

I also request the same bounty in behalf of M. d'Etallonde; and that with the more confidence because I know how much your majesty is so disposed, and am sensible of the merit of the man. Your majesty well may say it is impossible to remember his persecutors without indignation being excited, against those tigers, in long robes and cassocks, whose foolish and barbarous fanaticism was the cause of his sufferings. Our parliamentary Midases recommence their follies, and are remonstrating against edicts the most just, the very purport of which is the relief of the people. They burn silly works, that had been six years forgotten; and thus, by their condemnation, restore them to life. They persecute an unfortunate author, because his book-seller would not give a foolish Jansenist of the parliament the whole edition of an unknown book, which had displeased this idiot, although the work was privileged; and they occasion us to regret blockheads, at least peaceable ones,
whose

whose successors they are ; for we even should prefer the toad to the aspic.

It seems, too, that the affairs of England in America proceed but ill. Though a war at two thousand leagues distance interests me less than the war of 1756, I still fear lest the drop of oil should spread, and extend to us. My courage is in need of confirmation, from your majesty.

Our literature, ever poor, is particularly so at present. Nothing appears which even deserves to be criticised, and we fill up the vacancies of the French Academy as well as we can, after the manner of the lord of the gospel feast, and call in the halt, the maimed, and the blind of literature. But, while Frederic and Voltaire live, letters ought to take consolation.

Accept, sire, with your usual goodness, the assurance of all those sentiments which my heart has so long entertained for your majesty, and the profound admiration, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CXLI.

From the King.

March 17, 1776.

SINCE the last time I wrote to you, I have had two more fits of the gout. This is rather severe. I however believe that, for the present, I am divorced, and entirely freed from this vile malady. I am sorry to hear you are incommoded by the rheumatism; but our slight machine declines with age, and by insensible decay prepares for total destruction. My gout, however, salutes your rheumatism, from which, I hope, you will soon be delivered.

The winter has been violent; the barometer, on days of excessive cold, stood at eighteen degrees, which is two more than the point at which it stood in the year 1740. But the cold continued in this state only three days. Neither the corn nor the fruit-trees have suffered, and the thaw, which happened on the twentieth of February, has not damaged the mounds of the Rhine, the Elb, the Oder, or the Vistula, a thing which frequently enough happens, and is the cause of considerable loss. But I do not attribute gout to the intemperance of the weather.

ther. When we are young, neither the isicles of the frigid zone, nor the heats of the torrid, affect a robust and vigorous body. I have had the curiosity to ask how long the iron clocks in steeples last, and have been well assured that, at the utmost they do not exceed twenty years. Is it not therefore astonishing that our species, the fibres of which are of thread, and the muscles of clay, should resist the efforts of time with thrice the obstinacy of these clocks, which are composed of the hardest materials? The difference between us and clocks is, we are susceptible of pain, of which, while they wear away, they have no sensation; but, in revenge, we have also in our youth been susceptible of pleasure, and, in despite of age, rational persons are still, in part, thus susceptible.

I am persuaded the good actions of your young king give you pleasure, and that you have not written with the feelings of indifference on the subject. If the long-robed gentlemen overturn his good designs, those by whom they have been recalled are to be thanked. They ought not to be allowed to exceed their functions. They are paid to judge causes, and not to hold the sovereign in pupillage. You will perhaps see the court obliged to banish them a second time.

You have informed me that Voltaire is neither
marquis

marquis nor Intendant a little too late ; I have written to congratulate him. But there is no harm done ; he will easily perceive my ignorance is unintentional. If lies are told in passing from this chamber to the next, how many lies may well be propagated between Potsdam and Paris ?

You complain of the difficulty of properly filling up the vacancies of your academy ; it is the fault of the age. We have many more people of second rate abilities than were to be found in the last century ; but they had more men of genius. The mould in which these were cast seems to have been broken. When France shall lose the patriarch of Ferney, and one Anaxagoras, she will have lost all. As to M. Weguelin, whose merit I know, I shall not neglect, in time and place, to remember your recommendation. Were his style equal to the strength of his thoughts, he would perhaps be a second Montesquieu.

I can easily remove your fears, which the English, animated with martial fury, have incited. They have an inflammatory fever, but there is no appearance that the epidemic disease *

* Inflammatory fevers are not esteemed epidemic ; but the king did not trouble himself concerning the trifling accuracy of a simile ; he was a king. T.

should

should pass the ocean, and be communicated to the continent : their guineas have transfused it into the pockets of some *principi di Germania bisognosi di scudi* *. There no doubt it will end, and the American war will be to Europe what the combats of gladiators were to the old Romans.

My prayers are that you should be soon freed from your sciatica. I cannot yet renounce the satisfaction of once more meeting you in this world, being well assured we shall never meet in the next. Against this you ought not to plead ; having once become acquainted with you, we wish more often, and continually, to enjoy your company.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXLII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, April 26, 1776.

THOUGH the last news your majesty was pleased to send me, of the state of your health, calmed my inquietudes, the public, and particularly the public in France, have still had

* German princes wanting money.

Very

very serious alarms; but I was better pleased to confide in your majesty than the public; in which I acted rationally, since the public have ended where they ought to have begun, that is to say by silence. May you long enjoy your health and fame, for the consolation of your faithful Anaxagoras, who, at this moment, more than ever, has need of such support! He has the spectacle continually before his eyes of a female friend, with whom he has lived for twelve years, and who dies daily, in a decline.

This reason, without mentioning my health, or some affairs which require my presence, will prevent me from going, as I desired, and laying those sentiments with which my heart is penetrated at your majesty's feet. My poor machine is beside so shaken, by the rude attacks of winter, in addition to mental afflictions, that it is incapable of removal. It is therefore with regret that those good wishes only can attend your majesty, which circumstances will not permit me personally to present.

I know not whether your majesty be informed that, in some of the German gazettes, and afterward in some of the French journals, a letter, which it is pretended, by these gentlemen gazetteers, you have done me the honour to write, has been inserted, in which the French are
abused,

abused, Voltaire called an old woman, and the academy of Berlin an *afs**. This same foolish public, who so long were determined your majesty should be ill, could not find better employment than in believing this letter to be really written by your majesty. I have thought it my duty to disabuse the world, by inserting a reply in the journals, declaring these gentlemen gazetteers were liars. It is for your majesty, should you think them worthy your notice, to answer them in a different manner.

Our young sovereign continues to merit the good opinion your majesty has conceived of him. He loves goodness, justice, œconomy, and peace; but knaves, courtiers, and priests, do all they can to oppose the reforms and regulations which are presented to him, by those virtuous and enlightened ministers whom he has had the happiness and wisdom to select. My prayers for him are incessant, persuaded as I am that, of all the princes of his house without exception, he is the one we should have desired for a king, had not he been given us by propitious Fate.

I will not say as much for the parliaments, which daily more fully display their ill intentions, are daily more ignorant, and more opposite to good. It is said they mean to revive,

* *Un bête.*

and by their arrets to give force to, the absurd principles of theologians, on the interest of money. Nothing is wanting but this ridiculous act, which I hope they will put in execution, to deprive them of the little remaining credit they have, and to make even knaves and fools ashamed of being their partisans.

Some time hence perhaps I shall have a favour to ask of your majesty. Some men of letters have undertaken to print an edition of Froissart, a historian of the fourteenth century, of which, hitherto, we have had none but bad editions. There is said to be an excellent manuscript copy of the work, at Breslau; perhaps this will be necessary to them, and in such a case they will take the liberty to entreat your majesty will give orders that they may inspect the work. They flatter themselves they shall not be refused by the most enlightened friend and protector of letters that ever sat on a throne.

I perceive, by the answer your majesty has been pleased to make relative to M. Beguelin, that you imagined I spoke in favour of M. Weguelin, with whose merit I am acquainted, but who is not the object of the requests which I have taken the liberty to make to your majesty. The person I had the honour to recommend to your bounty is M. Beguelin, a mathematician,

matician, philosopher, and member of your academy ; a man distinguished in both those studies by his knowledge and writings, and worthy of your majesty's protection, by his sentiments and prudent conduct.

Your majesty adds greatly to my tranquillity, by your assurance that the contentions of America will not extend to Europe, and particularly to France. My song is continually that of the Evangelist, " On earth peace !" I do not so much as add—Good will toward men, for I fear peace would then only be for a few.

I am with the most profound respect, the most tender gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R CXLIII.

From the King.

May 16, 1776.

I KNOW not what the reports of Paris, concerning my illness, may be, but I am vain of resembling the English, whose losses are exaggerated, although they are not very considerable. My health is that of an old man, who has sustained eighteen fits of the gout, and who cannot

recover his strength as fast as a youth who is only eighteen years of age. But they will kill me in allegory, like as they make me write in the style of the packhorses of literature, and attribute ideas to me which never entered my mind. I am obliged to you for having given the lie to the compiler of the nonsense which has been passed upon the world for mine. I might demand government should prosecute the author of the imposition ; but I do not love to take revenge ; nor are these the kind of heroes I choose to combat. I read the reflections of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, which teach me that I came into the world to pardon offenders, and not to abuse my power to their destruction.

I compassionate, my dear Anaxagoras, that grief which friendship incites in you, and which is of the most pungent kind ; I know not which of the ancients has very well said that friends have but one soul in two bodies. I with mademoiselle d'Espinas may recover, for the consolation of your old age. But, should this happen, and should you yourself hereafter be better in health, must I for ever renounce the pleasure of seeing you ; or have I any reason to hope ? This is a question which I beg you to resolve.

Being ignorant whether the manuscript of Froissart exist in the libraries of Breslau, I have
written

written for information to the abbé Bastiani, on whose answer I may depend. If it be there, those who wish to write on this subject may receive every aid they can desire.

I am on the point of making my tour into the provinces, which will find me employment till about the fifteenth of June, when I may again have the pleasure to write to you. It is very certain we are the most pacific people in the world. The scene which is acting in America, and which perhaps is preparing for other parts, is to us like the combats of gladiators which the Romans (somewhat barbarous in the practice) sat tranquil spectators of, in their Circus, and which those monarchs of mankind made their amusement. The same actors cannot always appear on the stage; we have exhibited long enough, others must now take their turn. Your philosophy may therefore reflect, at its ease, on the cause and effects of that destructive war which now ravages America.

Continue in good health, this is the thing most necessary; and abandon men to their follies and passions, the consequences of which neither you nor I shall ever alleviate.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXLIV.

From the King.

July 9, 1776.

I AM sorry for the misfortune you have sustained, in the loss of a person to whom you were attached. The wounds of the heart are the deepest, and, in despite of the fine maxims of philosophers, time only can afford them a cure. Man is rather a feeling than a rational animal. I have, to my misfortune, too often experienced the sufferings excited by such losses. The best remedy is to do violence to ourselves, that we may drive an idea so painful from the mind, in which it takes too deep a root. Some geometrical calculation must be chosen, which requires great application, to disperse as much as possible those gloomy ideas the renovation of which is incessant. I would propose better remedies, were I acquainted with any such. Cicero, to console himself for the death of his dear Tullia, applied himself to composition, and wrote several treatises, some of which have descended to us. Our reason is too feeble to overcome the grief of a mortal wound; something must be allowed to nature; and, at your age
and

and mine, we ought the rather to take consolation because it will not be long before we shall rejoin those persons whom we regret.

I accept, with pleasure, the hope you give me of coming next year to pass some months with me. If I am able, I will efface from your mind all the disagreeable and melancholy ideas to which an event so fatal must give birth. We will reason together on our non-entity, on the philosophy of men, on the vanity of stoicism, and on our whole being. Here are subjects inexhaustible, on which volumes in folio may be written. Let me, however, entreat you to make every exertion you are able, to prevent your health from being affected by an excess of grief: I am too much interested to support this with indifference, On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXLV,

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, August 15, 1776.

MY pen, my soul, can find no expressions to testify the tender and profound gratitude with which I have been penetrated, by the letter

P 3

you

your majesty has deigned to write to me! A letter which is so full of truth, of interest, of sentiment, and of reason, collectively! Nay, fire, indulge me in the expression, so full of friendship! Why should I not, with a great king, employ the word which renders that great king so dear to my heart? I should not have delayed a moment to have answered this new mark of the bounty with which your majesty has honoured me, and which to me is so affecting, nor to reiterate, with increasing ardour, those sentiments on which you have so many claims, but that the expression of them would, in my own despite, have led me to indulge in affliction, which, no doubt, your majesty will kindly pardon, in consideration of my state of mind. Perhaps, too, that gentle and just satisfaction which your majesty at present enjoys might have suffered momentary interruption, by a picture so gloomy. The public papers have announced the journey of the grand duke of Russia to Berlin, and the union which this young prince is going to form with you; a prince who it is affirmed is, from his rare qualities, well worthy of such connexions. I have waited the moment of his departure, again to expand and pour out my soul to your majesty; and, particularly, most feelingly to thank you for the letter which is so
little

little in the style of royalty, but which therefore is to me only the more precious.

Your majesty need not say that—"You have, "to your own misfortune, experienced the sufferings excited by the loss of those we love." By the affectionate and true manner in which you address yourself to an afflicted heart, and afford that advice which is most suitable to its forlorn state, we perfectly perceive you have felt this cruel misfortune. All my friends seek to console me, all, like you, tell me I must endeavour to divert my attention; but none, like you, have added advice so worthy of the friend and the sage, as that—"our reason is too feeble to "overcome the grief of a mortal wound; something must be allowed to nature; and, at your "age and mine, we ought the rather to take "consolation because it will not be long before "we shall rejoin those persons whom we regret." Alas! this is my only consolation, or rather the hope which enables me to support the few remaining days I have to live. These I do not desire to see prolonged, except once again to throw myself at your majesty's feet; and my health must be very bad next spring if I do not repair, with the greatest eagerness, to acquit myself of a duty so precious and so sacred. It is now some years since I wrote to your majesty,

at a time when my infirm machine daily declined, that my greatest wish was to have a tombstone, on which the following words should be engraved—THE GREAT FREDERIC HONOURED HIM WITH HIS BOUNTY AND HIS BENEFITS. This tombstone, and these words, are, at present, more than ever, the sole remaining wish of my heart. Life, fame, study itself, are all to me become insipid. I feel only a solitude of soul, and that irreparable void which my loss has left there. My mind, fatigued and exhausted by forty years of profound meditation, is now deprived of that resource which has so often softened my pain. I am left the prey of melancholy; and nature, to me annihilated, no longer offers any object of attachment, nor even of occupation.

But wherefore, sire, so long detain you with my woes, when you have those of so many others to alleviate? Wherefore this detail of grief, when I ought to speak only of the laurels which, sixteen years ago, on this day, you gathered in the plains of Lignitz? Wherefore mention my sorrows to you, who are surrounded by, and busied with, interests so great? May those interests, fully accomplished, increase the fame and glory of your reign! May Nature, which has made you the greatest of kings, render you the happiest

happiest of men ! May she add those days to your life which I wish her to retrench from mine ; and may I drag this body to the knees of your majesty, shed my last tears in your bosom, and die grateful in your arms, after having once again enjoyed the happiness to see and hear you, to find you alive to those feelings which usurp and fill my soul, and to assure you of the tender veneration with which I have so long been inspired, and which, at this moment, is more than ever just and profound !

In such sentiments I shall, during the remainder of life, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVI.

From the King.

September 7, 1776.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear D'Alembert, on my return from Silesia. I perceive your heart still continues affectionate and tender, nor do I blame you. Our strength of mind has its limits, and we ought not to require impossibilities. Were a robust and strong man asked to set his shoulder to the walls and throw down the Louvre, his attempt would be
vain ;

vain ; but, were he asked to carry a hundred weight, he might easily perform his task. It is the same with reason, which may vanquish impediments proportionate to its powers, but there are some to which it is obliged to cede. Nature intended we should have feeling hearts, and philosophy cannot work miracles ; or, could it deprive us of such sensations, the deprivation would be injurious to society. We should have no compassion on the misfortunes of others, and men would become hardened and pitiless. Reason is given us to moderate every kind of excess, but not to destroy in man the qualities essential to man. Regret therefore your loss, my dear D'Alembert. I will even own with you that the losses of friendship are indeed irreparable ; and that, whoever is able to appreciate the true worth of things, must judge you deserving of friendship, because you are capable of affection.

But, as it is beyond the power of man, and even of God, to recal the past, you ought, on the other hand, to preserve yourself for your remaining friends, that you may not cause them that mortal grief which you yourself have felt. I have had friends of both sexes, five or six of whom I have lost, and I thought I should have died with grief. It happened, by chance, that I suffered these losses during my different wars,
when

when I was continually engaged in various affairs. These indispensable duties, perhaps, prevented me from sinking under my affliction. I wish some very difficult problem should be proposed for you to resolve, that study might prevent you from thinking on any other subject. In reality, no remedy except that and time can be found for you. We are like rivers, which preserve their names, but the waters of which continually change. When some of the particles of which we are composed are replaced by others, the recollection of the objects that have given us pleasure or pain becomes feeble; because, in reality, we are no longer the same but are in a state of continual mutation. This is a resource for the wretched, and by which all thinking beings ought to profit.

The hope you have given me, that I shall see you, excited pleasure in me for my own sake: I am now pleased with it for yours. You will meet with other objects, and other persons; and I give you notice I will exert myself, to drive from your remembrance whatever may recal ideas of grief, and melancholy, to your mind. I shall feel as much satisfaction, in conducing to your tranquillity, as I should to gain a battle. Not that I think myself a great philosopher; but because I have, unfortunately, experienced your present sensations, and for that reason
think

think I can effect this sooner than another. Come hither, then, my dear D'Alembert; be certain of being welcomed, and of meeting, not with a perfect remedy for your sorrows, but with lenitives.

On which I pray, &c,

L E T T E R CXLVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, October 7, 1776.

VIOLENT and continued head-aches have, for three weeks, prevented me from writing and thinking. These have been the gloomy consequences of indisposition of mind, and were to me the more cruel because they did not immediately permit me to answer the admirable letter, which your majesty was pleased again to write on my misfortune. How incomparable, sir, is this letter, and how few, I will not say kings, for it is a language with which they are little acquainted, but friends, can speak so affectionately to an oppressed and suffering soul! I daily, and repeatedly, read a letter so well calculated to calm my sorrows. I read it to all my friends, who, like me, are penetrated with gratitude for your majesty, and, while I read, incessantly repeat—

peat—"This great prince is right, yet I continue to afflict myself!"—Your majesty will not be surprised, nor will you despair of my cure, though I myself can see but little hope. The most effectual means to accelerate it would be profound study, which powerful remedy your majesty, with equal reason and goodness, proposes. But of this my poor head is no longer capable. From time, only, therefore, must I expect some ease to my pain, and I fear lest cruel time should rather devour than cure me.

The comparison which your majesty makes between wretched men and rivers, which are called the same although their waters continually change, is equally ingenious and philosophic; and rightly and wittily explains the reason why time affords consolation. But hitherto, sire, my gloomy river is only sensible of the pain of flowing, and has yet no hope of a more pleasant and smooth course. Were I five and twenty years younger, I might, perhaps, have the good fortune to form some other attachment, which would enable me to support life. But I am now almost sixty, and at this age we do not find new friends, to replace those we have had the misfortune to lose. This I feel in the most afflicting manner, at present, by a new loss, with which I am threatened, or which I rather sustain
before

before it arrives. A respectable woman, of great understanding and virtue, whose name your majesty has certainly heard, madame Geoffrin, who, for thirty years, has had the most tender friendship for me, and who, during my recent misfortune, afforded me every consolation and relief which friendship could imagine, has been struck with the palsy, above a month, by which she has been almost deprived of feeling and speech, and which leaves me nothing to hope. So far from preserving, I must never see her more. Her family, to whom she bears little resemblance, being religious, or feigning so to be, though they are rather foolish than devout, and proclaiming, without knowing why, a stupid hatred of philosophers and philosophy, will not, at this moment, suffer me to indulge the deplorable satisfaction of remaining with this worthy woman, and of rendering her all those kind offices which my tenderness for her might suggest. Of this, perhaps, the poor patient would not be sensible; but my heart, at least, would find ease. Thus, in the space of a few months, must I lose the two persons whom I most loved, and by whom I was most beloved. Such, sire, is the present wretchedness of my situation, with a depressed and aching heart, and not knowing how to employ my mind or my time.

But

But again, I must reproach myself for detaining your majesty with my affliction, when I ought to speak of nothing but my lively gratitude for all your kindness, of the profound admiration which your philosophy, so true, so uncommon, so reasonable, and so affectionate, inspires; and especially of the desire I have, once again, to lay all the sentiments I feel at the feet of your majesty. My health only can oppose this journey, which is too dear to my heart not to bestow every care in my power on this feeble health of mine, agreeable to the injunctions you are so kindly pleased to send. Alas! Sire, this journey is almost the only object which still attaches me to life, the loss of which I should not now regret, except because it would deprive me of again testifying my profound veneration for your majesty.

May you, sire, during the coming severe season, enjoy better health than you did last winter! I more than ever fear those violent attacks of the gout by which you were some months since so cruelly tormented. I have other fears; I fear the news of approaching war, which incessantly resounds in my ears, and which may engage your majesty in new fatigues, which now more than ever would be dangerous. In despite of affliction and philosophy, I still cannot forbear

to interest myself in the misfortunes of the wretched human race, which need not augmentation. I particularly feel the most ardent wish for the preservation, happiness, and repose of your majesty. You have more than once been pleased to quiet my apprehensions concerning wars with which I supposed Europe to be menaced, and by such assurances have restored my tranquillity. May you once again restore it at a moment when it is peculiarly necessary to me; and that more for your majesty's sake than for my own!

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVIII.

From the King.

October 22, 1776.

YOU here find yourself overwhelmed with verses, which, I imagine, you could have done full as well without. Yet I have supposed that some reflections, rather grave in their nature, might be consonant to that mild melancholy which you may at present cherish. The lines ask, for they merit, nothing better than to be burned before, or after, having been read. For
 2 my

my own part, I impatiently behold the fine autumn which we enjoy. I ask when winter will come; and I shall then ask, when spring will return, that summer may once more procure me the pleasure of seeing you. I exclaim,

*Volez, volez, heures trop lente,
Pour mes impatiens desirs *.*

When any one arrives from France, M. de Rouillère for example, I do not ask what Providence is doing in the third heaven of Versailles; nor whether your subaltern heroes, at three-pence per day, are thrown into dungeons, or have their shoulders disciplined with the flat of the sword; whether ships ride in your harbours; whether sleeves and coat pockets are higher or lower; or whether your hair be dressed in the form of a battle-axe or a purling stream†. In fine, I pass over a hundred things of like importance to ask—What is the duc de Nivernois about? How is Anaxagoras? Shall we soon have the *Æneid* of de Lille? These are the things by which I am interested in France; the rest to me is nothing.

* Fly, heavy hours; too slow for my impatient wishes!

† *Si Pon se frise en bec de corbin ou en ruisseau.*—Those only who know what whimsical names the French adopt, for their new fashions, will read of hair being dressed *en ruisseau*, or, like a rivulet, without wonder. T.

A propos ; I am informed your men are metamorphosed into women. Or, to speak more correctly, report says that, instead of monsieur d'Eon, we must write mademoiselle d'Eon ; in fine, that there are astonishing changes in nature ! Here we have an inexhaustible subject of scepticism ! What, say I to myself, will become of us, if the most enlightened nation in Europe cannot distinguish sexes ? M. de Vergennes will be obliged to send to the vatican for the famous sterficorium of the holy Peter, that all persons destined for foreign affairs may be examined, and that they may not be admitted till they have first received the solemn certificate of *pater habet* ! I know not how to behave to the marquis, or marchioness, de Pons ! I stand undecided in his presence, and know not whether to address him with a Miss or a Mr. ! True it is, he has a beard, but so it is pretended has D'Eon. Such incertitude perplexes my mind. For what will become of grammatical precision, should we no longer know whether to say *he* or *she* ? Were the abbé d'Olivet still living, I should have recourse to the plenitude of his knowledge. At present, I know not to whom to apply. These things render me so ignorant, so bashful, my dear D'Alembert, that I hesitate every word I speak, lest I should utter nonsense ! Strengthen my
judg-

judgment ! Inspire me with courage and effrontery enough to pronounce Mr. or Madam at a venture ; not being able to do better. I had no high opinion of my knowledge ; I was, however, clearly satisfied of some truths ; yet is here one, of the most trivial kind, of which I am ignorant ! I will therefore acknowledge, like I know not what philosopher, after much study, I know that I know nothing. Had but this accident of D'Eon happened eighteen hundred years ago, to have believed in her metamorphosis would have been an article of faith. But, God be thanked, the miracle has come to pass in our age ! Though this be not one of the follies that are inserted in our creed, who shall answer for those that are ?

Take pity on the most ignorant of men ! Come, next summer, and enlighten his darkness ; remove his doubts, and let him rejoice in your company ! Of this your ancient admirer is in expectation.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXLIX.

From the King.

October 26, 1776*.

THERE is a proverb, my dear D'Alembert, which is often proved to be but too true; "Misfortune never comes alone;" for which I should be very much embarrassed to give a tolerable reason, though the fact is not the less frequently proved by experience. Madame Geoffrin has had a paralytic attack, and, according to all appearances, after having languished till winter, she will be carried off by a fatal apoplectic fit. For you, and for literature, which she honoured, I am sorry; but, my dear D'Alembert, you certainly know she is not immortal. If we consider things properly, we cannot but discover the dead are not to be pitied, but their surviving friends. Man is subject to so many dreadful misfortunes that we ought rather to rejoice at the moment which terminates his sufferings, than at the day of his birth. But self-

* This letter, both in the Berlin and Basil editions, is dated 1777, and arranged accordingly; but, as its contents and the next letter of D'Alembert evidently prove there is an error in the date, I have restored it to its proper place. T.
retrospect

retrospect is afflicting; the heart is rent that perceives itself for ever separated from those who, by their probity and virtues, merited its esteem and confidence, and its attachment by I know not what sympathy, which sometimes subsists between tempers, and manner of thinking.

I am entirely of your opinion, that such friendships ought not to be formed at our age. They should be contracted in youth, strengthened by habit, and cemented by continued integrity. We no longer have time to form connections like these; youth is ill calculated to accustom itself to our manner of thinking. Each age has its education. We should associate with our equals in point of time, and, when they are gone, cheerfully prepare to follow.

I own, sensible minds are subject to be disordered by the loss of friends; but how many undescribable pleasures do they enjoy, which are never known to hearts of iron and impenetrable souls! Though I doubt if any such exist.

All these reflections, my dear D'Alembert, afford no consolation. Could I raise the dead I would; but this excellent secret you well know is lost, and we must do as well as we can. When I am afflicted, I read the third book of Lucretius, and find relief. It is but a palliative,

there are however no better remedies for maladies of the mind.

I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and I know not how indulged myself in some jocularity, for which, at reading your letter to-day, I reproach myself. My health is not too good; an abscess has formed in the ear, which has given me much pain. Nature sends us sickness and sorrow, that we may be disgusted with that life which we are obliged to quit. I understand her hints, and resign myself to her will.

You talk to me of war, and precursors which prognosticate the arrival of the god Mars. All that I know is, that the Portuguese are driving the Spaniards beyond all patience; and that, in consequence of a certain family compact, the most christian king will be obliged to aid his allies, and the belligerent powers will probably exhaust their rage by sea. You know that my navy wants ships, admirals, pilots, and sailors, hence it will probably remain inactive; and with respect to a continental war, I do not see how that can take place. The wish of your young king is only to live in good intelligence with all his neighbours, and it is to be presumed his excellent and sage dispositions will not be perverted, though there should be powers possessed of what the Italians call *La rabbia d'ambizione*.

*bizione**. From all which I conclude that, after having been beaten in the seas of the two Indies, the authors of the troubles, wearied of, or punished for, their enterprises, will make peace; and that Bellona and her attendant, Discord, will not disturb the rest of the earth.

Recollect, at reading this, that the oracle is not issued either from Delphos or the cave of Trophonius; but that they are human calculations on future contingencies, subject to error.

In the mean time, I heartily rejoice at the expectation of seeing you here; I even hope the journey will be salutary to you, because all things are salutary which divert affliction. I again repeat my advice; apply yourself to study. My friend Cicero, having lost his daughter Tullia, whom he adored, sat down to compose. He informs us he was obliged at first to lay constraint upon himself, that he afterward found pleasure in labour, and that, at length, he conquered himself so far as to appear at Rome, and not suffer his friends to discover in him much dejection of mind. Here, my dear D'Alembert, is an example for you; did I know a better, that I would propose. We are sensible of our own losses in proportion to the value at which we estimate them. The public, having lost no-

* The rage of ambition.

thing, does not so judge; but condemns with malignity what ought to inspire the most tender compassion. Such reflections do not increase our love of the public. Commit violence on yourself; live, and let me, once again before I die, have the pleasure to hear and see you.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R C L.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, November 14, 1776.

I RECEIVED, almost at the same time, the two letters with which your majesty has been pleased to honour me, dated the twenty-second, and twenty-sixth, of October. These letters, and that which I had the honour to write to your majesty, about six weeks ago, have been longer on the road than usual. The worthy clerks of the post-offices, receiving orders which, no doubt, are highly respectable, but which I should rather any person should execute than myself, who open letters on their route *through Germany* (for I dare not say *through France*) have apparently been more eager than usual to read for their instruction, or rather for their melancholy amusement, what

what a great king is pleased to write to an afflicted philosopher, and the answers of the poor philosopher to the great king. It cannot be denied, sir, but that these clerks are, in every sense of the word, *men of letters*, and have vast curiosity to examine the beautiful. Yet am I fearful lest these literary folks, who are so curious, and especially so polite, should not be worthy of gaining instruction, by reading your letters, nor of catching the spleen, by reading mine. Be it as it may, I should think myself much obliged to them not to retard, for several days, or even for a few hours, that consolation, so sweet and so necessary to my heart, which your majesty's bounty is pleased to bestow, under my present unhappy circumstances. I know not how to express the affections of my mind, such as they are incited by this bounty, nor to explain its sensibility and gratitude, which are so justly due to your majesty, at a time when I thought it susceptible only of grief.

Gratitude is not confined to me alone, it is participated by all my friends, who have the most tender veneration for your person. I wish your majesty, sensible as you are, alive as you are, to true fame, that is to the homage paid by enlightened and virtuous men, could hear their remarks when these letters are read, and could learn from their
own

own lips how highly the great Frederic, who long has been the subject of their praise and admiration, appears to them worthy of being beloved! I venture to believe that such a full concert of praise, so harmonious and so true, would affect your majesty as much as the victorious shouts of your soldiers, on the plains on which they have so often conquered. For my own part, I do more than admire and love; I listen, I profit by your lessons, I exert my whole powers to relieve my mind, and I attempt various kinds of labour, study, and even amusement. On certain days in the week, I invite my friends, and go in search of them on others. I mingle as much as possible in their conversation: I endeavour to persuade myself I take part in it, and that I am at least busied; and I try to convince others of the same, by the apparent interest I take in every thing which I hear and see. My friends sometimes think me relieved, and almost consoled; but, when they are no longer with me, when having quitted me I find myself alone in the world, for ever deprived of the first object of my attachment and preference, my soul, appalled, sinks painfully into itself, and can behold nothing but that void which surrounds and withers its powers. I am like the blind; their melancholy is deep when alone,
though

though when in company they are thought to be cheerful ; because those moments in which they converse with men are the only ones which to them are supportable. In vain would I follow the advice your majesty has been pleased to give me, and which you inform me you followed yourself, in affliction. In vain do I read the works of philosophers, and seek consolation in their company. I feel, as your majesty well says, that palliatives are the only remedies which can be administered to maladies of the mind ; and conclude by mournfully repeating the apophthegm of those philosophers, “ that the greatest comfort “ in affliction is the hope that affliction and life “ will both shortly have an end.”

This is poor pleasure ; but, as your majesty again has said, it is one of the means which nature employs to detach us from that life which we are obliged to quit, and recalls to my mind the saying of a solitary person, to those by whom he was occasionally visited, *In me you see a man almost as happy as if he were dead.* I resemble the old woman who was extremely desirous of becoming devout, but could not succeed : “ I “ absolutely cram myself,” said she, “ with books “ of devotion, yet can I swallow none of them.” I feel, in a much deeper sense than is commonly understood by the phrase, *how great a master mis-*

fortune is, and how many reflections take birth in consequence of an irreparable loss, cruel indeed to the recollection, but which, without such misfortune, never would have arisen. How much excess of grief extends and enlarges the soul ! And, when the mind has only one thought, how vast is that thought ! I was affected to tears by the passage in your last letter, which is so full of kindness and interest, in which you say—" I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and, I know not how, indulged myself in jocularity, for which, at reading your letter to-day, I reproach myself." Do not reproach yourself, sire ; be assured you possess what Tacitus says of Germanicus, *Per seria per jocos eundem animum* ; a mind which is equally captivating whether serious or gay. You even extend your bounty and call in the aid of poetry, to afford me consolation, and repeat, in elegant and harmonious verse, what you have been pleased to say in eloquent and philosophic prose. Your prose ought to be signed Seneca, or Montagne, and your verse Lucretius, or Marcus Aurelius.

Poor madame Geoffrin continues in the same situation, surrounded by physicians, who can afford her no ease, and fools and devotees, who weary her, while she is deprived of the sight of persons who might best afford her satisfaction,

and while I am equally deprived of the mournful pleasure of mingling my tears with hers.

Your majesty has been pleased to remove those fears I entertained for you, and particularly for myself, on the subject of war. I ardently wish you could remove my afflicting alarms, relative to the uncertain state of your health. Be careful of and preserve yourself, first, for philosophy, letters, your people, and, suffer me to add, for my consolation. I wait, with the utmost impatience, for the approach of spring, that I may personally convince myself of the state of that health which is so dear to me, and accomplish the wishes of my heart, by laying at your majesty's feet those sentiments of admiration, veneration, gratitude, and affection, with which I, more than ever, &c.

L E T T E R C L I .

From the King.

November 29, 1776.

THOSE who have the misfortune to be suspicious usually extend their curiosity too far. Letters are broken open, the secrets of families are penetrated, and the asylums of their houses
are

are no longer held sacred. Be they Germans, be they French, who have opened the letters, they have found no food for their curiosity. Some moral reflexions, which regard ourselves, or trifling jokes, which can only incite a smile at the moment, have been the utmost of their discoveries : we have but to write in the same style and they will presently be disgusted.

I wish my letters may have afforded you any ease, for such was the intention with which they were written. You do well to seek amusement ; continue to act thus, and time will effect the rest. The grand point is to prevent the mind from fixing itself on one object. This object, as you have well observed, is more vast than it is supposed to be ; all that surrounds it is gloomy, and very proper to destroy the illusions of the world, to detach us from the inn in which we have taken up our lodging, to make us recollect the shortness of our stay, to lower the pretensions of self-love, and to convince us of its insignificance.

Such ideas are ill adapted to festivals or carnivals : still it is good to have had them, that we may estimate things at their true worth. Pleasure afterward becomes less ardent, and more rational ; we see time presses us, and we should be lunatics not to enjoy a certain good, instead
of

of courting a vain shadow. Thus must we brighten the dark shades of meditation, by intermingling more vivid colours, that we may bear the load of life, and not imagine it impossible to be borne.

I have lately lost a general, whose name, though not very sonorous, ought to be remembered by the whole world of women; general Koschenbar, who lost his wife, about a year ago, and whose tenderness, and excessive grief for her, were such that they have brought him to the grave. This might furnish a subject for a tragedy, but ought not to be followed as an example. Our whole duty to our friends is a tender remembrance of their virtues, and, if we are able, to succour their descendants, and those whom most they loved. But I ought not to touch on this subject, to awaken feelings which are but too familiar to and forcible in your heart.

Appearances forebode that madame Geoffrin must sink under her disease. But what excess of fanaticism is that which exercises its rigour over a dying woman; which prevents her from seeing her friends, and from expiring in the manner she pleases! I cannot recover from my astonishment! France, indeed, possesses philosophers; but I maintain that the bulk of the nation is more superstitious than any people of Europe.

This

This phrenzy manifests itself in acts such as the prosecutions of Calas, Sirven, and La Barré; in what has happened at Toulon, relative to D'Argens; and the cries of the public, on the subject of Necker *. But there are a hundred examples which prove that the fatal leaven of fanaticism still ferments in France, and that this will be the last country in Europe in which it will be preserved. I bless the destiny of Germany, to see that toleration there is daily progressive. The pernicious zeal which occasioned so many bloody scenes is extinguished, and no man asks his neighbour what is his religion. For this reason Germany deserves the philosopher D'Alembert should come and bestow a glance on her, and I shall be the more glad to see him appear because it will divert his sorrows, and give me great satisfaction to see him once again.

I have had an erysipelas on the leg, and a large abscess has formed under the knee, which I was obliged to have opened; but the wound will be healed in a few days. You have well divined; it is my intention to be useful to my country, and to my cotemporaries, during the short time I have to live. It is the duty of man

* Necker was this year placed at the head of the French finances, and clamours were incited against him because he was a Protestant. T.

to assist others, as much as he is able, which is an abridgment of all morality; and the good heart would be dissatisfied with itself, were this duty to be neglected. I very sincerely wish your affliction may diminish, and your health be confirmed, that I may this summer assure my dear Anaxagoras of my whole esteem.

On which I pray, &c.

P. S. Voltaire has written me a very melancholy letter, and says he is overwhelmed with misfortunes; let me beg you to explain what he means.

LETTER CLII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, December 30, 1776.

DID I not respect the occupations of your majesty almost as much as your person, and did I not know you have better employment than to read my lamentations, or my nonsense, I should take the liberty to write oftener, although, at present, I write but too frequently; so much relief do I find from the answers which your majesty has the kindness to return. I begin more efficaciously to feel the effects of the advice you have been pleased to give.

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F

I again

I again have applied to the mathematics, which I had long since abandoned, as it were, and the consequences are exceedingly salutary. Although it is far from delicious, life begins to be tolerable, and I hope that time, study, and particularly the happiness of soon seeing your majesty, will aid me to support my existence.

Poor madame Geoffrin, for whom your majesty is generous enough to interest yourself, because of the tender affection I bear her, and because she is herself a worthy woman, remains in an afflicting situation, and without any hope of recovery. Happily she does not suffer much, either in body or mind; and for this I bless fortune; for, did all her mental sensibility remain in its full energy, how bitter must be her present gloomy condition, when increased by being deprived of seeing those whom most she loves!

Well indeed may your majesty say France, with all her philosophers, of whom, right or wrong, she is so proud, is still one of the most superstitious and unimproved nations of Europe; and that the good Germans, whom our *petit maitres* treat with airs of disdain, are by no means so foolish as we are. I can discover none but the Spaniards to whom we must yield the precedency in religious madness. What does your majesty say of the things which are now transacting

transacting in that wretched kingdom; of the solemn splendid procession, which has been lately made at Cadiz, by the Inquisition; of the acclamations of the people who, prostrating themselves on their knees, in the street, during the ceremony, shouted *Viva la Fè di Dios**; of the government which suffers this; of the publication which the inquisitors have been audacious enough to make of the bulls of pope Paul IV. and pope Pius V. which declare every man shall be subject to the inquisition, without excepting the sovereign; and of the king of Spain himself, who not only suffers, but, as it is said, authorizes this insolence? Report affirms that this execrable tribunal is recovering its whole vigour and activity, and that a Spanish lord of great note has already been condemned (by special favour) to perpetual imprisonment, for having caused the lands to be cleared in several districts of his unhappy country, by heretics, whom he had sent for from Germany.

These things are sufficient to augment that melancholy which Voltaire testifies in his letters. He has another cause of affliction. A work, rather curious in itself, has been printed, I know not how or where, entitled—THE BIBLE

* May the faith flourish!

AT LENGTH EXPLAINED, AND COMMENTED UPON BY SEVERAL ALMONERS* OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF P. You will easily divine, sire, who this king is. People have thought proper, I know not why, to believe, and to affirm, that Voltaire is the clerk to these chaplains; and it is added that our lords the parliament, who are as well informed as the Santa Hermandad †, and who do not with the Bible should be explained by heretics, mean solemnly to burn this explanation, which however will not be purified by fire; and that they encourage ill-will toward the clerk; not but it is very kind in him to stand in awe of their threats. Might not your majesty do him the service to order your ambassador to inform the first president, and the king's ministers, that this vile work has really been written by your chaplains, who have been obliged to find themselves amusement, to relieve them from the total idleness in which they are left by your majesty? You would, by such a declaration, perform a very good work, for which philosophy would have signal obligations to your majesty, worthy of those she has so long received.

* Or chaplains.

† A Spanish court of justice, from which there is no appeal, instituted to punish crimes committed on the highway, and in the country districts. T.

I wish

I wish much to learn what have been the consequences of the erysipelas, and the abscess under the knee. I am acquainted with an old man of eighty, who was much tormented by the gout, and who having, like your majesty, had eruptions on the skin which ended in an abscess, has felt no more of his gout for these two years. How much do I hope your majesty might find the same ease; and how happy shall I be to be told I am a prophet!

Accept, sire, the assurances of the part I take in the birth of a new prince, who has been added to your august house. Let me entreat you to accept, likewise, with your usual goodness, my ardent wishes for your preservation and happiness, during the coming year, which will, no doubt, be a fortunate one to me, since it will procure me the inestimable pleasure of again laying at the feet of your majesty all the sentiments of the tender and profound veneration with which, during life, &c.

L E T T E R CLIII.

From the King.

January 25, 1777.

I AM glad to learn from yourself that you begin to apply to the mathematics. That intense application, which geometry requires, insensibly will accustom the mind to subjects different from those which inspire grief, and time will do the rest. I flatter myself that your journey into the land of the Obotrites will be advantageous to your health. It will be an additional diversion, which will weaken the deep impressions sorrow has made upon your mind. For my own part, the pleasure of seeing you will be very great. We will converse on philosophy and metaphysics; but you must expect us to banish from our discourse all cloudy ideas, which will but occasion the roses and flowers that would spring up for amusement to droop and wither.

Letters from Spain, some months since, announced indications of that alienation of mind into which the king of Spain has fallen. The greatest mark of folly a man can shew is to abandon himself to his confessor. It is supposed the prince of the Asturias only waits the moment
when

when his father shall be guilty of some false step to confine him, and reign in his stead. We shudder, with indignation, to behold the Inquisition re-established in Spain. Alas! my dear Anaxagoras, good sense is more rare than it is supposed to be. To expiate his amours with the white cow, his catholic majesty delivers up himself, and his faithful subjects, into the hands of tonsured executioners, who do more mischief, in this world, than the fiends themselves, in that imaginary hell which we have borrowed from the Egyptians.

Your counsellors of parliament would be the very people to protect an inquisition. Their zeal against Voltaire appears to me suspicious. It may very probably be the consequence of that resentment which they cherish, because he celebrated their expulsion by some excellent verses. They ought to blush with shame. What honour can they derive from persecuting a poor old man, who is on the brink of the grave? If we examine the subject well, Voltaire has done nothing more than collect the opinions of some Englishmen, and their criticisms, on the Bible. He wept himself for their audacity, and appears to have written merely with an intention that he should be refuted. So many things have been written, in this age, against religion, that his commen-

taries on the Bible are not so strong as an infinity of other works, which have so ruined the edifice that it is propt up with difficulty ; but it is more easy to condemn a book to the fire than to confute its doctrines.

Should my chaplains be seriously mentioned in France, the ministry would laugh in my ambassador's face ; so ill established is my reputation for orthodoxy. Yet I cannot but perceive the despondency of Voltaire in his letters with pain. It should seem that he is molested in his establishments at Ferney. He informs me he has lost a law-suit, is a ruined man, and shall spend his old age in poverty. This is the enigma of the Sphinx, to explain which requires another Oedipus.

What happens to Voltaire has incited a reflection in me, which unfortunately is but too true. We often very inconsiderately wish long life to our friends. Had the scene closed upon Pompey at Tarentum, where he was attacked by a violent inflammatory fever, he would have expired in the height of his fame, and would not have seen the fall of his republic. Had Swift died soon enough, his servants would not have exhibited him for money, when he became an idiot. Had Voltaire left the world last year, he would not have met all the vexation of which he so bitterly complains.

complains. Let us therefore leave vague chance to act, without troubling ourselves concerning length of life; let us rather wish for happiness while we do live.

The nephew in whose behalf you congratulate me died when he was three days old. I think like I know not what people in Africa, who wept at the birth of children, and banqueted at their death; because the dead only are free from grief, and the innumerable misfortunes to which men are subject.

I shall add nothing on the new year; it will certainly be a happy year to me, since it will again procure me the pleasure of meeting the sage Anaxagoras, and of personally assuring him of my esteem.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, February 17, 1777.

THE favours which your majesty continually heaps upon me, and the interest which you so kindly take in the progress of my mental convalescence, as continually incite my gratitude.

This

This progress is very slow. Profound study no doubt is a relief, and I sometimes appear to take pleasure in conversation. But when fatigued by labour, or by society, which soon happens, I find myself alone; and, totally unconnected as I am in this best of possible worlds, my solitude terrifies me, and turns me to stone. I resemble a man who sees a long desert before him, which he is to cross, and at the end of this desert a destructive abyss, into which he is to drop; without the hope of finding a single being who shall weep his fall, or recollect him when he is sunk, never more to rise.

I always perceive too late the folly I commit in recounting my dark ideas to your majesty, which you kindly wish to dissipate. Rather let me speak of my intended journey, of the pleasure I shall feel when I lay all those sentiments of respect, gratitude, and admiration, with which I have so long been penetrated, at your feet, and of the happiness I shall once again enjoy of seeing and hearing you. Though my health, at present, is not too good, and though the least alteration of regimen, or in my uniform manner of living, is very sensibly felt by my poor frail machine, I yet hope this health and this machine will permit me to participate your majesty's kindness, and to come and philosophise with

you on the great evils, and the few good things, of this life.

In my present mournful situation, I endeavour to find ease wherever I can ; and I sometimes think it is at least a pleasure not to live in Spain, nor in dread of inquisitors. As your majesty well observes, it is really humiliating, to a sovereign, thus to submit himself, and his faithful subjects, to the mercy of a jacobine. How well did the sacerdotal gentry understand their own intentions, when they instituted confession ! Blessed be kings who do not confess !

Voltaire has no *white cow*, but he continually fears people who commit cows to the flames. I believe, however, he is at present a little more at his ease, concerning the Bible explained and commented upon, by your majesty's almoners, who have nothing better to do than to comment upon the Bible for others, since your majesty does not think proper to let them explain it for yourself. But I am informed there is another affair, concerning which he is much afflicted. His establishment at Ferney becomes burthensome to him, because of the little aid he finds for its support, now that M. Turgot is out of office. He informs your majesty he is ruined, but that is not entirely true; and the good he does to his unfortunate vassals would excite my sorrow
if

if it were. But it is very true that several great lords, on whom he has annuities, do not think proper to pay him; as, for example, the duke de Bouillon, marshal de Richelieu, and especially the duke von Wurtemberg. Nor is there so much as a farmer-general, it is said, who does not give himself airs of making this poor old man a bankrupt, and of treading in the steps of Wurtemberg, Bouillon, and Richelieu.

Well indeed may your majesty recollect the various evils with which the rugged path of life is strewed. Well may you applaud the good sense of the African tribe, who wept at the birth, and not at the death, of man. All that philosophy can say for our consolation is that these ills will end, and that it is *better late than never*. I hope, at least, my ills will not end without being alleviated by once again paying my court to your majesty, and renewing those testimonies of tender veneration with which I shall, to the end of life, &c.

L E T T E R CLV.

From the King.

March 7, 1777.

THE operation of remedies for the mind, my dear Anaxagoras, is slow, and proportionate to the violence of that evil the attacks of which you have felt. Your convalescence could not be expected to be more advanced. You must continue to employ the tonica of mathematics, to which we will add the exercise of travelling, and the successive ideas which new and variegated objects will inspire, and we shall by degrees recover the calm of your mind; not indeed so far as to efface the loved remembrance of those who were so dear to you, but sufficiently to render life more supportable. When we are in the flower of our age, we repair the loss of former friends by the acquiring of new; but those who, like us, are burthened with the load of declining life do not contract new friendships; for such ties are only strengthened by an equality of youth, and a parity of opinions, taste, and passions. The rising generation has shades that differ from the past; nor do the splendid inclinations of youth assimilate with the phlegm which, more or less, predominates in age. We must therefore

therefore be satisfied with making acquaintance, nor attempt to form the strong bonds of new friendship, unless indeed some confessor should, by his ascendancy, subjugate our hearts. I will pledge myself that, with respect to you and I, this will never be the case. Offensive alliances with the cuculati, for the conquest of new Jerusalem by their aid, are only for great monarchs. We who are limited and confined in this world cannot form projects so vast. Some heretic must certainly be burnt in Spain, as a sin-offering, for the amours of the white cow. We cannot but own this is less a subject of mirth than of compassion, recollecting the blindness of the poor human race, for whom happiness, certainly, was not formed. The Inquisition will commit new ravages in Spain, and, by its tyrannical despotism, stifle the genius of the nation.

Poor Voltaire suffers another kind of persecution at Ferney; I am obliged to you for informing me of the cause of his chagrin. Not to mention his uncommon talents, his great age ought to be his protection.

You cannot entirely conquer your affliction, and I have, for a week, been kept in mortal inquietude for the health of my brother Henry; who, having gone to visit our sister of Brunswick, was suddenly attacked by an inflammation

tion of the lungs. He has fortunately overcome the disease, and his recovery has restored my peace.

Such are the griefs of us three ; and, were we acquainted with all that relates to a multitude of individuals, we should not find their situation better. Inconsiderate, inconstant, and turbulent youth alone is thoughtless for the future, and is happy because it does not reflect. Nor ought we to meditate on what we cannot amend. Our misfortunes apologise for our incongruity ; and we must weaken and forget them, if we can. I own it will be a real pleasure to me to meet and converse with you : it will be a moment of happiness which I shall place on the creditor side of the account, as a compensation for many disagreeable moments. I propose to convince you of my gratitude, for it is a satisfaction I owe you.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CLVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, April 28, 1777.

M. DE CATT will inform your majesty of the mournful reasons which will not permit me to come and lay all the sentiments of gratitude, veneration, and devotion which I owe you, at your majesty's feet. I will not repeat circumstances so afflicting to myself, and so wearisome to your majesty. I feel my situation the more sensibly because I can certainly find no substitute to the pleasure which I promised myself of passing some moments with your majesty, of seeing, listening to, and philosophising with you; and of conversing of all that interests you, much rather than of that which interests myself. I do not, however, sire, renounce the hope of once more seeing your majesty; but I neither dare form projects nor make promises, from the fear that I again shall not be able to fulfil them. As I flatter myself I shall not be always languishing and unhappy, I perhaps may find some moments of my life which I may consecrate to your majesty; and these will indubitably be to me the most agreeable of moments. May fortune in this be propitious!

Your

Your majesty has crowned all your former favours by the preparations, of every kind, which you have been pleased to make, for my ease and convenience on the journey. They never shall be abused by me, whenever I shall find the want of them; and one of my greatest subjects of regret is that I cannot come in person to testify my tender gratitude to your majesty.

I reproach myself that I am thus the melancholy subject of my own letter. I shall speak with more pleasure on what is passing here. The comte von Falkenstein, whose real name is known to your majesty*, has been at Paris a fortnight. I have not yet seen him, because of my retired mode of life; and probably shall not, unless he should visit our academies, which is at present uncertain. Should he come, I intend to read, at the French Academy, a short eulogium on Fenelon, which may interest him; and, at the Academy of Sciences, some reflexions on the theory of music. They have both been long written, or, however indifferent they may be, I should not be capable of writing them at present. This prince seems to be to-

* Falkenstein was the travelling name the emperor assumed, that he might, as a private person, inspect things which, as an emperor, forms and ceremonies would not have permitted him to have examined. T.

lerably successful here; he is thought to be polite, affable, and desirous of information. He has declared that, should he visit the academies, he will hear no compliments; and, though it is our trade to pay them, he shall be obeyed. Wherever he goes he has neither precursor nor even attendants. He seems to take little pleasure in our theatres, but receives much more satisfaction from inspecting useful establishments, or such as are intended so to be. He went the other day to visit the hospital of the Hotel Dieu, and beheld with horror the cruelty with which the sick are there treated, where they lie fix in a bed, the dead beside the dying, and the dying beside a patient recovering. Nor is it because the Hotel Dieu is not exceedingly rich, consequently in a state to do much better; it is because there are *administrators*, to which I need add nothing.

Rumour says the emperor means to visit our ports. He will find our marine not in the splendid state in which it was, for a short time, under Louis XIV. but at least tolerable, and much better than it was left by the bad policy of cardinal de Fleuri. Good citizens hope the emperor will inform the king his brother-in-law of the dreadful management of the Hotel Dieu, of which the young monarch, no doubt, is ignorant;

rant; and that perhaps some remedy for this horrible abuse will be the result.—God grant!

We are much occupied concerning the insurgents, and very impatient to learn what will be the success of the decisive campaign which will soon open. We are told the English depopulate Germany, to send troops to America. It does not seem to me to be very polite, and still less honourable, to see many petty German princes thus send their subjects two thousand leagues to be murdered, that their masters may maintain an opera-house. It is reported too that most of the soldiers settle in America, and this seems to me the best part they can take.

The tyrant of Portugal is fallen! The accounts of his despotism excite horror! But perhaps they are exaggerated*. The Inquisition continues its vexations in Spain, as we hear; and, since the king allows it so to do, follows its trade.

Accept, sire, with your usual goodness, those expressions of regret that I am unable to convey, any otherwise than by writing to your majesty, of the tender and profound respect with which I shall, to the end of life, &c.

* The marquis de Pombal, who was removed, from his office of first minister, on the death of the king of Portugal. T.

L E T T E R CLVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, May 23, 1777.

I THINK it my duty to render an account to your majesty of a conversation which I have had the honour to hold, with the count von Falkenstein, and in which your majesty is interested. He came on Saturday last, the seventeenth, to the French Academy; and, after listening to the various readings, he had the condescension to seat himself beside me. He accosted me in the most obliging manner, and added—"It is reported you mean to go to Germany this year, and that you intend to become wholly German." I answered, I had indeed formed the project of going to pay my court to your majesty, and pass some of the summer months with you; that I had very much desired to undertake this journey, but that the ill state of my health would not permit me; and that my affliction at this was increased, because of the excessive bounty with which I had been invited to Prussia, by your majesty.

"If I do not mistake," said he, "you have already seen the king of Prussia."—"Twice," replied I; "once in the year 1756, at Wesel, where

“ where I only remained a few days, and the
“ other time in 1763, when I had the honour
“ to pass three or four months with the king.
“ Since this time,” added I, “ my wishes again
“ to see his majesty have been continual, but the
“ gratification of them has always been prevent-
“ ed. I particularly regretted my inability to pay
“ my court to him, the year in which he met
“ *the emperor* at Neifs; but, at the present mo-
“ ment, I have nothing more to wish, on this
“ subject.” — “ It was very natural,” answered
he, “ that *the emperor*, who was young, and de-
“ sirous of instruction, should wish to see a mo-
“ narch like the king of Prussia, whose renown
“ is so great, who is so famous a commander,
“ and who has acted so capital a part. It was a
“ scholar desirous of visiting his master.” Those
were his very words.

“ I could wish,” said I, “ that the count von
“ Falkenstein could see the letters which the
“ king of Prussia did me the honour to write,
“ after the interview; he there would perceive
“ the opinion of his majesty, respecting *the em-
“ peror*, was that which has since been con-
“ firmed, by the universal voice.”

I imagined your majesty would not be sorry
to be informed of this conversation. I shall not
add any dull detail of what the emperor was

pleased to add, relative to myself; I shall only mention that I read two short essays, in the assembly. The one consisted of some synonymous words, in the manner of the abbé Girard; among which were the terms *simplicity* and *modesty*; which ended by a slight and indirect application to the emperor, and which he seemed to me to feel with satisfaction. The other was a very short eulogium on Fenelon, in which likewise were several allusions relative to this person; and, among others, one on the travels which Fenelon was desirous his pupil, the duc de Bourgogne, should undertake, and that he should travel without the pomp and retinue of a prince.

The comte von Falkenstein has tasted the fruits of the simplicity with which he travels at the theatre. Some days since he went to see Oedipus, and at that passage of the first scene of the fourth act in which Jocasta recites the following verses,

*Ce roi, plus grand que sa fortune,
Dédaignoit, comme vous, une pompe importune *.*

the whole audience turned toward him, and applauded repeatedly. This simplicity is an ex-

* The monarch, superior to his state, like you, importunate pomp disdained.

cellent

cellent example which the emperor has afforded our princes, who do not at present travel like him; and this example was set him by another king, who may well be regarded as a model in all things, for sovereigns. The emperor has examined with pleasure every thing here which merits to be examined; he has given marks of much understanding, and seems to be desirous of information. On Friday last, he visited the Academy of Belles Lettres, when the members read such of the most interesting passages, from their memoirs, as had been written within the last six months. Among them was one on the opinions of the ancients, concerning the rage of gaming; at which he turned to M. Turgot, who presided at the assembly, and said, "This memoir is applicable to the age." The rage of gaming is in reality greater than ever, at court, in despite of the good example of his majesty.

As the intention of this letter is entirely to inform your majesty of the journey of the Emperor, I shall add no rhodomontade of Arthur and his knights, by talking of myself. My health continues exceedingly languid, nor has the fine weather hitherto effected any great change. It is true that this fine weather is very bad weather, for we have had continual rains during six weeks.

I conclude by renewing the regret I feel that I cannot repair to your majesty's feet, there to lay those sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and profound respect which, for so many reasons, I am indebted to you, and with which I shall, all my life, &c.

L E T T E R CLVIII,

From the King.

June 1, 1777.

I AM sorry to hear of your ill state of health ; it is a very unseasonable disappointment of my expectations, which had been raised very high by the hope of seeing you. We must once again hope that another occasion will be more favourable. I understand all France is at present occupied by the count von Falkenstein. He is the first emperor, since Charles V. who has been in France ; but his journey will be neither so expensive nor so dangerous, as was that of his predecessor. Austria and France are allied, and he has no mistress on whom he might bestow his diamond rings. He indicates great ardour to obtain information ; for which reason
he

he neglects trifles, and fixes his attention on things relative only to government. He is very affable, and indeed somewhat too much so.

I can divine the substance of your discourse on Fenelon. You would not forget his *Telemachus*; and this would afford you an opportunity of treating on the most desirable perfections of a prince; thus, while you should draw your picture, every person would recollect the young monarch who was your auditor. Such praise is artful, and cannot displease, because the frankincense is not rudely wafted in the face of the person praised.

I have lately read a work entitled *La Philosophie de la Nature* *, by one Delisle, in which I have found some good things, some crude opinions, and not so much method as might be desired, in a philosophic work. Your priests are said to be enraged against the author, and that he is banished France. His book, certainly, does not merit so much severity.

I am on the eve of my departure for Prussia; when I return my letters shall be longer. At present I shall limit myself to good wishes for your entire recovery, in the hope that I shall personally be able to assure you of my whole esteem.

On which I pray, &c.

* The Philosophy of Nature.

L E T T E R CLIX.

From the King.

June 3, 1777.

I AM sorry to hear your health is not restored ; we must hope that, by time and regimen, it will recover its original vigour.

I perceive it is difficult to prophesy. I had imagined what your discourse before the emperor would be ; but the manner in which you managed the subject was still more artful, and more flattering. I am exceedingly obliged to you, for what you said to this monarch. I am not surprised that he should meet approbation so great at Paris ; he has much understanding, is affable, and desirous of information. He saw himself in a country where there are a multitude of things to admire, and he applauded with judgment ; not like ignorance, astonished at the sight of new objects. The French are accustomed to meet with Germans who have scarcely left the school, and who in general frequent tolerably bad company, in Paris. Surprise must have been increased when they saw the head of the nation better educated than they imagined monarchs can be. Should the queen,
his

his mother, travel to that country from which no man returns, he would soon make himself the subject of conversation.

M. de Jaucourt, the relation of the Encyclopedist, has been to see the review at Magdeburg, and is one of the most amiable Frenchmen I have long met. We conversed much concerning you. He possesses knowledge. I questioned him respecting his relation, who studied physic, under Boerhaave, for his own satisfaction. One of his family was the governess of my sister of Sweden, and of another of my sisters, who is dead. He went with me as far as Pomerania, and is gone to Vienna, to see the Austrian troops, having obtained the emperor's permission. I myself have been as far as the country of Copernicus, which is not at present the country of philosophers; but, if the soil be not changed, I hope they may there be produced.

A discourse has appeared, full of satyrical truths against government; but these are but words, which enter at the ear without making any impressions on the heart. War still continues to be made on the poor Americans.

Grimm is to pass through Berlin, on his road to France, whence he is shortly to return to Russia. If he do not acquire a knowledge of the world, no man can. He has only to visit
Sweden

Sweden and Greenland to have been every where. I take more pleasure in study than in thus posting over the earth. Men of all countries resemble each other; their passions are the same. Some indeed are more and some less ardent, but the result will be little different, and the variety of manners and customs may be learnt as well from reading as from seeing. Anaxagoras only is worthy the trouble of being sought after. Adieu, my dear D'Alembert. Health and courage! By the aid of these, I do not yet despair of meeting you.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLX.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, July 28, 1777.

I AM penetrated with gratitude, for the interest which your majesty is kind enough to testify for my health, and for the part you have the goodness to take in the mortification I suffer, that I cannot lay all the sentiments I owe you at your majesty's feet; which is increased by the impossibility that I should find any substitute for the sweet satisfaction I had promised myself. My

misfortune is such that I cannot even, at this moment, taste the only, and the melancholy, pleasures which remain. The weather is so rainy, and even so cold, that I cannot so much as walk, though that was my sole resource. My winter friends being all dispersed, I almost daily find myself alone, with feelings more than ever alive to the losses I have suffered, and to the conviction that they never can be replaced.

But I abuse your majesty's bounty, by thus insisting on so gloomy a subject. Rather let me testify the pleasure I feel at learning, from M. de Catt, that your majesty's health is excellent; and that it not only supports the prodigious exercise, which your majesty takes, but that it even gains strength.

The count von Falkenstein, who left us at the end of May, has also travelled hard, on his visits through France. He will no doubt profit, for his own administration, by the good and ill which he has every where met, beginning with the metropolis. I had before heard, from more than one good judge, though this were needless after hearing your majesty's opinion, the same remarks which you have been pleased to make, relative to the empress queen; although I never have had the honour to approach that princess, of whom, if I had, I should not have taken the
freedom

freedom to judge. She merits, at least in my opinion, praise, for having inspired her children with that love of simplicity, and with that affability which renders princes so dear to their people. I imagine the emperor, at present, is in his own provinces; he was to pass through Geneva; and, I suppose, after having seen so many things, some of which were scarcely worthy the trouble, he will likewise wish to see the patriarch of Fernel, who, by such an Imperial visit, would have years added to his life. It is long since I heard from him, though I believe him to be tolerably well. I imagine the poor devil of the author of *La Philosophie de la Nature* is now with him, after having been so cruelly and foolishly persecuted by the wretched Jansenists, who, at the Chatelet*, sit in judgment on the lives and liberties of men. Our lords the parliament have treated him better, because they were in awe of public opprobrium; for the honour, however, of the magistracy, they have not dared to absolve him, but thought themselves obliged to give him a gentle reprimand; which he, indeed, in some degree merited, for not having written a better book. Your majesty has passed a just sentence on this rhapsody, which deserved not

* The Westminster-hall of Paris.

to have been so much the subject of conversation.

Grimm, we are told, will return to France, this winter ; again to repair to Petersburg. True it is, I would travel farther in search of health ; but I should travel in vain ; Hygeia would fly faster than I could pursue. I am, however, something better, just at present, thanks to the summer season, bad though it be ; but my stomach is only waiting for winter, to play me its usual tricks. I must prepare for battle, and in the mean time be patient.

It is long since I have seen my former coadjutor, the Encyclopedist, the chevalier de Jaucourt. He lives in great retirement, and, as it is said, is preparing a new edition of Morery, for he can only labour on works which contain several volumes in folio. The short productions of Racine and La Fontaine have fewer words, but more ideas. We all act as well as we can, for our own amusement, but it is not equally easy to amuse others. The quaker Freeport, in the *Ecoffaise** of Voltaire, rightly says, it is more difficult to procure amusement than wealth ; and the difficulty is increased when we endeavour to amuse the splenetic.

* *The Scotchwoman*—well known to the English stage, by Mr. Colman's translation, entitled—*The English Merchant*. T.

I have

I have read the speech of Mr. Pitt, or lord Chatham, who would have acted much more wisely had he kept his first name. This speech is, in reality, as your majesty says, full of melancholy truths, but to which the English government has not attended. It madly pursues the American war, in which it will be unsuccessful, and has given us time to restore our marine, and render it capable of opposing the British flag. The last intelligence we have received does not announce a splendid campaign, on the part of the English.

Were there no indiscretion in such questions, I should be very desirous of hearing your majesty's opinion of that war, of the political and military conduct of the English, and of the manœuvres of Washington. I should not dare to ask such opinion, were I not certain you will say more in a single phrase than others would in a volume. The characteristics of your political, military, and literary judgment, are terseness, brevity, and precision; and the Venetian advocate would say to you, as to his judges—*E sempre ben* *. But I am afraid this same advocate, were he to read my present long letter, would bid me be silent, and respect the precious moments of your majesty. I therefore conclude,

* It is always right, or good.

by requesting you to accept, with your usual goodness, the tender veneration with which I shall, to the end of life, remain, &c.

L E T T E R CLXI.

From the King.

August 13, 1777.

I BEGIN my letter by a quotation from Chaulieu, as a lesson to old men like us.

Ainsi, sans chagrin, sans noirceurs,
De la fin de mes jours poison lent & funeste,
Je sème encore de quelques fleurs
Le peu de chemin qui me reste*.

Thinking thus, the clouds of the mind are dispersed, and mild tranquillity succeeds those agitations by which we were troubled. It is not for me to preach to sages; it is a philosophic poet who speaks.

I hear the count von Falkenstein has visited ports, arsenals, ships and manufactures, but not Voltaire. Ports, arsenals, ships, and manufactures, are every where to be met with; but, to produce a Voltaire, ages are necessary. Had I

* Thus, void of sorrow, void of gloom, which at the close of life are poisonous to peace, I strew my short remaining road with flowers.

been the emperor, I should not have passed Ferney, without having listened to the old patriarch; that I might at least say I had heard, had seen him. I believe, from some anecdotes which have reached me, that a certain lady Theresa, who is very little of a philosopher, has forbidden her son to visit the patriarch of toleration. The good qualities which the emperor possesses he derives from himself; they are his own stock; it is his own character which has improved his education. I was intimately acquainted with marshal Bathyani, who was his tutor. He was a worthy man, and capable of inspiring a young prince with good principles. I once again repeat, Helvetius is mistaken, in his work on the understanding, when he affirms that men are born with nearly the same degree of capability. This is contrary to experience. Men are born with an indelible character. Education may impart knowledge, and render the pupil ashamed of his defects; but education never can change the nature of things. The root remains, and each individual bears in himself the principle of his actions. This must be so, because we discover there are eternal laws. Is it probable, having found there is any one determinate thing in the universe, that all things should not be so? I know I am speaking on a grand question; but, when I address myself to
the

the most sage of the philosophers of the Gauls, it is a question for him to resolve.

You wish to know what I think of the conduct of the English. I think with the public, that they have finned against good faith, by not keeping the compact which they had made with their colonies; and, by an ill-timed declaration of war, against one of the American states, from which nothing but evil could result. The English were stupidly ignorant of the strength of the colonies; and imagined they might be subjected by general Gage, with five or six thousand men. They have hired troops without having provided transports to convey them to America; they have bought provisions in the London markets for an army which was to fight in Pennsylvania; in fine there are no kind of blunders with which they may not be reproached. Why separate the corps which Carleton commanded, and that of which Burgoyne is at the head, by a distance of three hundred miles? How could these corps, at so great a distance, afford each other mutual aid? In a situation like this, was it necessary, in pure gaiety of heart, to quarrel with the Russians; to offend the Dutch, by their insolent arrogance; and, by their ill conduct, to increase the number of their enemies?

Observe, however, I declare the veil of fatu-

rity is so thick that it is as impenetrable to my eyes as it is to the eyes of others. Were I to follow the example of Cicero, and foretel what a certain combination of events seem to forebode, I should perhaps venture an opinion that the colonies, according to appearances, will become independent; because they certainly will not be crushed this campaign, and the government of the God-damn-mes will find it difficult to dip into the purses of the people, to furnish supplies for the next campaign; and because, before the approaching spring, war will be declared between the French and English, who will battle with each other in the colonies; and, should not fortune be exceedingly averse, France perhaps may recover Canada.

Reveries here are, since reveries you wish; but events shall be as it shall please the fates; and, happen what will, it need not prevent us from "strewing the short race we have to run
"with flowers."

I know not what is become of Grimm. It is said he has left Petersburg, in the company of another monarch, who travels incognito. He is therefore very probably at Stockholm now; yet I think you will see him again at Paris.

With respect to yourself, my dear D'Alembert, I know not whether I ever shall, or shall
not,

not, see you more. This will not hinder me from wishing you every kind of prosperity, finer weather than we have had this summer, the mild influence of internal content, and a sprinkling of cheerfulness, which constitutes the felicity of life.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, September 22, 1777.

RETURNING from the country where I had been to pass some weeks for the recovery of my health, which is but little better, I found the letter at Paris, with which your majesty has deigned to honour me, and the very philosophic reverie which it includes, and immediately sit down to write an answer.

First I must humbly thank your majesty for the advice, which you and Chaulieu give me, to strew the short race I have to run with flowers. You, sire, speak of these things exceedingly at your ease, crowned as you are with every kind of glory, and possessed of the power to daily render men happy. I, who have not the same

advantages, can only strew my path with thistles; or, at best, with blue bottles, such as infest corn fields, which could do full as well without them.

I have been as much surpris'd as your majesty, at the little desire the count von Falkenstein has shewn to see the patriarch of Ferney; and I have no doubt but your majesty has justly divin'd the cause of this *apparent* indifference; for I wish to believe, for the honour of the monarch, it is not *real*. At least people are well persuad'd it is not the result of his sister's advice, who is said highly to esteem the patriarch, of which esteem she has more than once sent him assurances.

Notwithstanding the taking of Ticonderago, and the new advantages which the English promise themselves, I think, with your majesty (in whose predictions in this as in many other things I believe) that these very insolent Islanders will not prevail over their colonies; and I confess I shall not be sorry to see them thus humbled, which, by their folly, they will merit to be. It does not however appear that they mean to renounce the project; and should they, as they probably will, attempt another campaign, our poor France, it should seem, will have another year to breathe; for I have no doubt
they

they will declare war against us as soon as they are able, which I rather wish we may be than suppose we are strong enough to maintain.

Grimm is really at Stockholm, in the suite of the king of Sweden. I know he proposed going to Berlin; and perhaps he has already paid his court to your majesty. This is the only happiness I envy him, and which I do not yet despair but that I may myself enjoy. Such is my last and only hope, which, at least, I delight to nourish, though my disordered machine should never permit it to be realised.

I now come to the excellent reverie which your majesty has sent me. How many people, and even princes, who are wide awake, do not think so connectedly as you dream! But, for the misfortune of the human race, yours, alas! is not enough a dream. The subjects it treats on are but too real. Reflecting on human follies, while reading this reverie, and seeing how charmingly they there are ridiculed, I repeat

On ne peut s'empêcher d'en pleurer, et d'en rire.*

On this occasion I take the liberty to offer a hint to your majesty, the object of which is the progress of knowledge; which, in despite of your efforts, and particularly of your example, is so slow. In your academy, sire, you have a

* At once we are forced to weep and laugh.

class for speculative philosophy, which, under the direction of your majesty, might propose very interesting and very useful subjects for the prize questions.—As for example,—“Whether “it be useful to deceive the people.”—We have never dared to propose this great question to the French Academy, because the dissertations, sent for the prize, must, to the misfortune of reason, undergo censure by two doctors of the Sorbonne; and because it would be impossible, with people like these, to write any thing rational. But your majesty has neither préjudices nor doctors of the Sorbonne; and such a question might very worthily be proposed by you, to all the philosophers of Europe, who would take a pleasure in the enquiry. Such subjects, in my opinion, are of higher importance than those which have hitherto been proposed by that metaphysical class. The last appeared to me an exceedingly strange one, from its unintelligibility. I have met with no person who did not think the same; and I am very certain my friend La Grange was not consulted. He would most assuredly have prevented the academy the vexation of being subjected to ridicule.

I take the liberty, sire, to add a memorial to this letter, on the subject of which I most earnestly entreat your majesty to order a circumstantial

stantial answer to be given. The subject itself is so interesting that I have no doubt of the success of my request. The Royal Society of Physicians at Paris consist of the most select and best informed persons of the faculty; and, knowing the bounty with which your majesty honours me, they have addressed themselves to me, to present this memorial to your majesty, that they may obtain the information they desire. I most humbly beg you will be pleased to give orders for that purpose.

We have, as usual, a very fine autumn, after having had, till the beginning of August, a most villanous summer. I dread the approach of the bad weather, and even begin already to perceive the increase of the cold. But let it do with me as it pleases, provided it will but spare the truly precious health of your majesty.

I am, with the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CLXIII.

From the King.

October 5, 1777.

I AM persuaded the air of the country must have been salutary to you, especially the change

change of place, and objects, which tend to expel gloomy ideas and impart strength to our thinking powers, sufficient for them to recover their natural tone.

Colonel Grimm has been here, and I have confided another scrawl to his charge, more serious than my reverie, which I submit to the censure of Philosophy; for she only has the right to judge whether men reason well or ill. You will, perhaps, think me a great spoiler of paper, but you will be less astonished at this if you will but remember it is my method to meditate in writing, that I may correct myself. I find the method to be good, because we may forget our reflections, which when committed to paper are never forgotten.

Give me good humour, my friend, for it is the only lenitive that can render the burthen of life supportable! I do not say that we always have the power to command this disposition of mind; however, by gliding over the superficies of evil, and imitating Democritus, we may find amusement in that which, to a misanthrope, would appear insipid: Voltaire, for example, may preserve all his good humour, although he has not seen the count von Falkenstein. How many sages have estimated the not having seen sovereigns as a part of their felicity! A visit from

an emperor might flatter the vanity of a common man, but Voltaire should be above such trifles.

You speak of a question to propose to the academy. Alas! We have recently lost poor Lambert, one of our best members. I know not who could treat the subject philosophically; Beguelin I believe to be the only person; but I shall see what can be done. If we consult the acataleptic sect, we must acknowledge that, to the sight of man, most truths are impenetrable; and that we are in a kind of cloud, a fog of error, which for ever deprives us of the light. How therefore may man be certain, some mathematical truths excepted, being deceived himself, that he shall not deceive others? He who would deliberately impose opinions on the public for his own interest, and to promote any private views, is no doubt culpable. But is it not lawful to deceive mankind, when they are deceived for their own good? Thus, for example, is it wrong to disguise a potion which the patient is averse to take, to induce him to swallow it, that being the only means of cure? Or is it a crime to diminish the loss of a great battle, that a whole nation may not be discouraged; or, in fine, to conceal some misfortune, or danger, which a man might feel too sensibly, were it told without precaution,

precaution, that he may be predisposed to act with fortitude or resignation?

Ancient history attests that ambition has ever made religion its ladder. Mahomet, and numerous other chiefs of sects, confirm the fact. They have no doubt been culpable; but let it, on the other hand, be remembered that most men are timid, and credulous; and that, if some religion had not been announced to them, they would have invented one for themselves. This is the reason why religious worship is discovered to exist almost over the whole surface of the globe. As soon as these religions have taken root, the fanatic multitude will have them respected; and woe to the man who wishes to undeceive them; because there are few people who are capable of reasoning consistently. This should not prevent every philosopher from combating fanaticism, because it is a delirium which is productive of horrid crimes, and of acts the most abominable.

I now come to the remedy which you request, and you will herewith receive all the explanations you wish, with a small dose of the preparation. The fact is certain; the inventor has performed wonderful cures, of which there are the best proofs. Some of it should be sent to the English parliament, which, it should seem, has

has been bitten by a mad dog. Its members act like lunatics. You will certainly go to war with these God-damn-mes; their colonies will become independent; and France will recover lost Canada. I wish such predictions may be more indubitable than the oracles of Calchas.

You always leave me that which was at the bottom of Pandora's box. But you know the proverb—*On désespère, quand on espère toujours* *.

If I am not able to see you in this world, I appoint you a meeting in the Elysian fields; where I shall find you in company with Archimedes, Cassini, Anaxagoras, and Newton. Be in no haste, however, to undertake the journey; for this I am too much interested in your preservation to wish.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLXIV.

From the King.

November 11, 1777.

I HAVE ordered Catt to send you every information, relative to the remedy discovered for the bite of a mad dog. There is no need of

* Hope never accomplished breeds despair.

any

any permission to enter into correspondence with our academy ; it receives all letters addressed to it, and returns answers.

I just add, I think it necessary to inform you I have been surpris'd to see letters which I have written to you in print, and to hear there are others, circulated through Paris, in manuscript. I know not whether, as some affirm, it be certain that Pythagoras was the contemporary of Numa ; but it is very certain that there are no letters remaining addressed by Numa to Pythagoras. In like manner, we do not find that Plato, who was at the court of Dionysius, published his correspondence with that tyrant. Aristotle has not transmitted to us any of the epistles addressed to him by Alexander. The philosophers of our times act on principles different from those of the ancients, and their conduct will impose silence on modern princes.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, November 27, 1777.

M. GRIMM, on his arrival at Paris, gave me the packet with which your majesty charged him for me. I have read the excellent writing it contains with avidity, and I thought immediately to have returned my most humble thanks to your majesty; but I recollected that, having so lately written, I should importune you by too frequent letters; and that you have better employment than that of so often reading my trifles. I rather chose to employ the time in repeatedly reading, and in causing others, who were deserving of the honour, to read a work so worthy of your majesty, so full of the most excellent principles of government, written with so much reason, wit, and elegance, and in which your majesty proves how sage your precepts are, by the care and success with which you practise them yourself. Your conduct, and the example you afford to other monarchs, are even superior to the sage and beneficial lessons which they may extract from your writings.

May

May you long continue thus to afford them both precept and example !

It is a month since I had the misfortune to lose madame Geoffrin, the only true female friend that was left me. After the loss of the woman with whom I passed my evenings, I went, to assuage my sorrow, and sat every morning with madame Geoffrin, whose friendship was my resource. At present I neither know what to do with evening nor morning, and I rid myself of them without profit or pleasure. I ask pardon of your majesty for speaking continually of myself, and am afraid I abuse your goodness.

When I had the honour to propose the important question to your majesty—"Whether it be useful to deceive the people"—My intention was not precisely that you should command your academy to examine the subject; but that it should be proposed by the metaphysical class, as a prize subject; which can only be done for the next prize subject, since there is a question already proposed that, unfortunately, cannot be retracted.

Since your majesty is pleased to wish to enter into the question with me, I think, under correction, it is necessary to distinguish between errors which are transitory, and temporary, and those which are permanent. It is past dispute
that

that we may, and perhaps ought, to indulge the people in temporary error for some greater good, or to avoid some greater evil, of which your majesty brings examples that cannot be contested. There are greater difficulties relative to permanent errors; and I know not whether encouraging them would not always be rather inconvenient than advantageous. But the subject requires much discussion, for which reason it is that I wish to see the question proposed, to the philosophers of all Europe, by the most philosophic of sovereigns.

Well may your majesty say the English parliament is not very philosophic, and that its conduct is that of a legion of lunatics. We wait with impatience for the interesting news of the close of the campaign, which, fortunately for the enemies of England, and unfortunately for humanity, will probably not be the last. The meeting of the parliament is the moment on which much depends. We shall see whether England will consent to ruin herself, that she may completely lay waste and depopulate her colonies.

The statuary Tassart, who has lately written to me, appears ardently zealous for the service of your majesty, and desirous of increasingly meriting your favour, which I take the liberty to request

quest you will bestow on this honest and able artist, who deserves, from character and talents, to be happy.

I have a proposal to make, which may be agreeable to your majesty. In one of your letters, you have done me the honour to speak with esteem of the work entitled *La Philosophie de la Nature*, the author of which, M. Delisle, has been so unworthily treated by the inquisitors of the Chatelet. Those of the parliament have acted with less severity; but this unfortunate cause has ruined his fortune, and he will have need, in order to escape the danger that threatens him, to attach himself to a protector who is a philosopher. His ardent desire is that your majesty would be pleased to become this protector. He is a man of thirty, of a noble and distinguished mien, with great mildness of character, worth of principles and morals, and much knowledge, as is proved by his work. If I am not mistaken, your majesty would be pleased with him. He would conceive the most tender veneration for, and become entirely devoted to, your majesty; and, by the charms and amenity of his conversation, would afford you some pleasure, when you relax from your fatigues. Should your majesty consent to attach him to yourself, and be pleased to inform me on what conditions, I

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have

have no doubt he will accept them; provided those conditions, as I cannot but suppose, be such as to induce him to hope a fortunate destiny for the remainder of his life. M. de Voltaire joins with me in the same request to your majesty, and we wait your answer.

I am, with the most tender and the most respectful devotion, &c.

LETTER CLXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, November 28, 1777.

I AM new thanks in your majesty's debt, for the order you have been pleased to give, that an answer should be returned to the request I took the liberty to make.

But a more pressing affair occupies me at this moment, and will not permit me to defer answering the afflicting letter I have just received from your majesty.

Your majesty complains that some of the letters you have done me the honour to write to me have been printed, and that others are circulated through Paris in manuscript.

My apology must be an exact statement of facts.

Afflicted as I was by the loss which I last year suffered, I opened my heart to your majesty, with whose bounty I was so well acquainted. You had the goodness to answer by writing two letters, so full of reason, feeling, and wisdom, that I found an alleviation to my sorrows by communicating the contents of them to my friends. The reading produced (I do not exaggerate) the most tender veneration for your majesty, and some of the hearers were affected even to tears. They requested copies of them, certain that the same sensations which they themselves felt would be produced in others who should hear them read. These copies I refused; I only gave an extract to two or three of them of the most interesting, the most moral, and the most affecting passages in the letters, and such as best might conduce to make their august author respected and beloved.

These extracts were printed in a journal, without my knowledge, though, to own the truth, I could not repent of seeing them printed, by the general effect they produced on every reader. If I be guilty it is of having, if possible, increased the number of your majesty's admirers; and I scarcely can think that such a

fault will render me criminal in your eyes. At least the intention ought to excuse the act.

With respect to all the other letters which your majesty has done me the honour to write to me, I can assure you I never gave a copy to any person on earth, neither of the whole nor in part; nor have I read them to any but a very small number of sages, to whom every thing which comes from your majesty is dear and precious. I have not heard that manuscript copies are circulated in Paris; and, if there be any such, I dare assure your majesty they are factitious and imaginary.

This is not the first time that letters which have been said to be addressed by your majesty to me have been printed; I have two or three times publicly given the lie to such forgeries; of which, at length, I was weary, and only requested those who read them in future to regard them as impositions.

It may happen that some mutilated and incorrect phrases may have got abroad from these letters. Of this I am ignorant: but your majesty may recollect that, when some such phrases were current a few years ago, you suspected they were published by those who, between Berlin and Paris, are known to open all letters that come by the post. This you did me the ho-

nour to inform me of, and, if the fact of which you complain be true, it may originate in the same cause.

I hope your majesty is convinced, if, through my zeal, or through my neglect, any extracts from your majesty's letters are made public, they can be only such as could not offend any person, and the sole effect of which must be to make your majesty more beloved and respected by those who, only knowing you were a king, were ignorant that you are a man and a sage.

Plato took care not to publish the letters of the tyrant Dionysius, for they did not resemble those of the philosopher Frederic. Aristotle has transmitted a letter to posterity, written to him by Philip, the father of Alexander; which letter does more honour to the memory of Philip than all his victories over the Athenians.

I repeat—Such, sire, is the exact and pure truth. May it convince and move your majesty, and restore me to that favour which I have not merited to lose, in my present melancholy situation, amid the affliction for the losses I have suffered, which is not weakened. Nothing but this was wanting to complete my misfortunes; and this, sire, I shall want the fortitude to survive! But you will not have the courage so profoundly to aggravate my sufferings.

I am,

I am, with the most afflicted heart, but with the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CLXVII.

From the King.

December 20, 1777.

I SATISFY myself with acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and, as mine may be read by all Paris, I shall only reply relative to the sieur Delisle, of whom you have spoken, that there is no place here which will suit him, and that I imagine the best thing he can do will be to go to Holland, where the trade of book making procures bread for many people of his species.

On which, &c.

L E T T E R CLXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, January 30, 1778.

YOUR majesty persists in thinking me culpable, in despite of my apology. Let me

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entreat

entreat you to indulge me in a few more words, for my justification. Never, sire, never did I suffer copies to be taken of the letters which your majesty has done me the honour to write to me, some philosophic reflections excepted, by which you were pleased to endeavour to assuage my grief, after the loss I had suffered. These reflections appeared to me a most excellent abridgment of morality, for an afflicted philosopher, and such as were most proper to increase, as they have done, the number of your majesty's admirers. My motive was so worthy a one, and its general success was so correspondent, that I cannot possibly repent of it, notwithstanding your majesty's dissatisfaction; though I did not allow myself to give the copies in question to more than one or two of my friends, and I certainly never should have sent them to the press without your majesty's permission.

With respect to other things which your majesty's letters might contain, I have been exceedingly scrupulous, nor ever permitted any person to copy a single line. I even only read your letters to a very few people, taking care to suppress whatever might, in the least, be thought to betray your majesty.

Such, sire, has been my conduct; but your
majesty

majesty knows that all letters, and yours especially, are perhaps ten times opened, between Berlin and Paris. Of this you have yourself complained, in several letters which you have done me the honour to write to me; because the openers of letters had, in effect, abused their license, and reported even incorrectly their contents. It is not my fault, sire, that this execrable abuse exists through almost all Europe; nor ought I to be made its victim. I defy any man to lay such a proceeding to my charge, and to prove his accusation.

I therefore hope your majesty will be pleased to credit my assertions, and to render more justice to my sentiments, my worth, and my discretion.

It is my duty to thank your majesty for the copy you have been pleased to order of some lines, from the manuscript of Froissart, which is at Breslau. This copy is found to be perfect, and answerable to the intentions of the new editor.

Your majesty should by this have received the printed letter, which I have written, on the death of poor madame Geoffrin. She tenderly loved me, because she was herself convinced I was capable of love. She was my only remaining female friend, after her whom I had lost.

I am

I am now left desolate on earth, and more to be pitied than your majesty imagines. I need not add to my afflictions that of having displeased your majesty, and of having unmeritedly incurred your displeasure. I venture to think you will continue to console me, by your letters, and will not envy me this only remaining satisfaction.

I take the liberty, here, to add the discourse which I pronounced, some days since, before the French Academy, at the admission of the successor of Gresset. The public received this discourse with the utmost indulgence, both when it was pronounced and when published; but I shall not be entirely satisfied with my success, unless this trifle should be honoured by your majesty's approbation. I have endeavoured to characterise, to the best of my abilities, the poetry and the poet; so that poets themselves, who are but little favourable to mathematics, did not appear to me dissatisfied.

I now conclude my letter, which is much too long for a proscribed wretch, like me, and for a monarch whom I believe to be more than ever occupied. Though I scarcely dare any longer speak of public affairs to your majesty, I still indulge myself in the wish that you may not be engaged in a war which, while it increases your glory, will injure your repose. Of glory you
have

have no more need, but much of health and ease.

I am, with the most profound respect, and the most tender confidence in your bounty, &c.

L E T T E R CLXIX.

From M. D'Alenbert.

SIRE,

Paris, March 30, 1778.

MY first propensity was to begin my letter by adding a word concerning my affliction and my innocence; but trifles ought to give place to great events, and my heart inclines me to begin with speaking of the glory which your majesty derives, in the eyes of all Europe, by declaring yourself the protector of Germany, and the defender of its princes. I know not, nor do I seek to divine, what the consequences of so noble and glorious a step will be, which will make so respectable an epocha in the life of your majesty. My wishes are confined to your preservation, health, and happiness, and that you may be successful in the worthy example you at present afford to other monarchs.

I now, sire, for a moment, return to myself. I know not whether some passages from your letters,

letters, which may have given offence, have really been circulated through Paris and Versailles; but, though these copies should not be incorrect and unfaithful, as often happens, they still were not given by me. I had even the circumspection not to write a word to Voltaire concerning himself, from the fear that he should make an improper use of such communications; and, since he has been here, I have been equally guarded, from the same motive. He is now at Paris, universally applauded, but very ill. He has given us a new tragedy, which, considering his age, is an astonishing performance.

Your majesty is, at present, so occupied by the most important affairs that I fear intruding upon your time; I will only suffer myself to add a word, relative to what you have done me the honour to say concerning my letter on madame Geoffrin, that—"Though I have neither night nor morning, I have noon and afternoon for my consolation *." Alas! fire, (for I cannot imagine you would, in your humanity, ridicule my present situation) these two parts of the day are more gloomy than the others. My unfortunate digestion obliges me

* This letter from the king is omitted; the editors of Berlin best know why. T.

to pass them alone; nor can I see a few friends, who alleviate without putting an end to my affliction, till toward the evening. - Deign, sire, to grant me the most efficacious of all consolation; restore me to your favour, which, I venture to say, I have not deserved to lose, and of the value of which I am more than ever sensible.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R CLXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, March 31, 1778.

YOUR majesty has so long accustomed me to receive marks of your benevolence that I venture to take the liberty, at present, to request one more, in favour of a person truly worthy of this distinction, which you will yourself grant, as soon as he shall become known to you. The vicomte d'Houdetot, colonel and lieutenant of the gendarmes, who will have the honour to present this letter to your majesty, is a young officer of distinguished birth, a man of courage and honour, enamoured of his profession, who travels to gain information, and who, certainly, cannot

cannot better accomplish so praise-worthy an object than in the excellent school of which you are the institutor, the chief, and the model.

To these claims on your majesty's bounty, the vicomte d'Houdetot adds another, and one which best may affect the feeling heart of your majesty. He is the son of a most respectable mother, a woman of understanding, sensibility, and virtue; and, I am bold to say, worthy herself of experiencing your favour in the person of her son, by the sentiments of admiration and respect with which she is penetrated for your majesty; sentiments which she delights to dwell on, as I have frequently been a witness, and with which she has unceasingly inspired her son.

I therefore venture most ardently to supplicate your majesty would be pleased to permit the vicomte d'Houdetot to approach your person, to see and listen to you for a few moments, and especially, under your auspices, to be a spectator of the admirable manœuvres which excite the astonishment of Europe, and which are themselves so interesting an object, to a young officer anxious for improvement. He will preserve an eternal remembrance of the favour done him by your majesty, should you be pleased to grant this request. He will, particularly, never forget the happiness he will have enjoyed, and which

which is desired, at this moment, by so many others, of having beheld your majesty at, perhaps, the most brilliant epocha of a reign which had previously been so glorious; at that very remarkable moment in which you, sire, act, in presence of all Europe, a part so worthy of yourself; that of the defender of Germany, and the protector of the Germanic body; the same part by which the great Gustavus Adolphus acquired so much fame, whose successor your majesty is, and whose glory you will efface.

Rumour has announced, with the highest praise, a memorial of great strength and dignity, which your majesty has lately published on the present situation of the empire. We have not yet read a writing so worthy of yourself, here, in France, but we greatly desire to read it, having long been accustomed equally to admire your majesty in what you do, and in what you write.

I am, with the most profound respect, and with sentiments of admiration and gratitude, which I shall bear with me to the grave, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R CLXXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, June, 29, 1778.

YOUR majesty, no doubt, will neither be astonished nor offended at the silence in which I have three months remained. I have thought it my duty to respect those truly respectable occupations which, certainly, at present, take up the time of your majesty, and induce you to act a part so worthy of yourself in the eyes of all Europe; and for the success of which all Europe, and particularly all France, offer up the most ardent and sincere prayers.

An event has passed here in which literature is greatly interested; M. de Voltaire is dead. I imagine your majesty must have heard of all the follies which have been acted and repeated on this occasion; the refusal of the priest of the parish to inter him, although he had, in writing, declared that he died a catholic, and that, if he had brought any scandal on the church, he asked the church's pardon; of his burial, at the distance of thirty leagues from Paris, in a clandestine kind of manner, at the abbey of his nephew; of the reproaches and threats by which the unfortunate prior of that abbey has been assaulted,

faulted, who defended himself in a letter to which his very superiors have judged no reply could be made; of the refusal given to the French Academy to perform mafs for him, according to custom; and, in fine, of the stupid and ridiculous joy of all the fanatics, at his death. These infamous proceedings, collectively, will dishonour us in the eyes of Europe, and of posterity; could Europe and posterity remain ignorant that they are not the work of the nation, but of the disgraceful part of the nation, who, unfortunately, are in power.

I am penetrated with the most lively gratitude, for all the favours which your majesty intended to grant to the viscount d'Houdetot, who unfortunately has been unable to profit by them, according to his wishes. His wife, since his departure, is brought to bed; and the whole family gave the child the name of Frederic, as a mark of gratitude, though your majesty has rendered this name so difficult to bear.

I fear, while renewing the expression of all the sentiments I owe your majesty, lest I should intrude upon moments so dear to your fame, and the grand object by which you are occupied, for the good of Germany, Europe, and mankind. When you are more at leisure, I shall do myself the honour to write more at length, and give a

free course to those expressions of admiration, and tender and profound veneration, with which I shall all my life, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, June 30, 1778,

I DID not receive the letter which your majesty did me the honour to write, on the truly irreparable loss by which literature is at this moment afflicted, till yesterday evening, the 29th of June. I did myself the honour, that very day, to write a letter to your majesty, which was sent away some hours before I received yours, and in which I mentioned the death of M. de Voltaire, with some particulars that followed. My letter was brief, because of the very important and respectable occupations which engage the precious moments of your majesty, and, on which, at present, the attention of all Europe is from interest fixed.

Your majesty requires a circumstantial account of the death of the great man whom we have had the misfortune to lose. Being no longer under restraint from the fear of intruding on time so worthily

worthily employed, I shall immediately endeavour to satisfy your wishes ; and, as I foresee the letter will be long, I begin it to day, June 30th, though it will not depart before the 3d of July, that I may immediately execute the commands of your majesty.

That you may well understand what has passed, and judge of all the silly things that have been said and done on this gloomy occasion, it is necessary I should date my narrative back. At the beginning of March, M. de Voltaire, who had been at Paris three weeks, had a considerable spitting of blood, an accident which had never happened to him before in his life. Some days previous to his illness, he asked me, in a confidential conversation, how I advised him to act, if, during his stay, he should fall seriously ill. My answer was what every prudent man in my place would have made ; I said he would do well to act, under such circumstances, like all the philosophers by whom he had been preceded ; among others, like Fontenelle and Montesquieu, who had submitted to custom.

*Et reçu ce que vous savez,
Avec beaucoup de révérence *.*

* And received what you wot of, with much reverence.

He highly approved my advice. "I think so too," said he, "for we must not be thrown on the dunghill, where I once saw poor Le Couvereur thrown*." He had, I know not why, much aversion to this mode of burial, which I took care not to oppose, being desirous that, in case of misfortune, every thing should be done without trouble, or cause of offence. Consequently, finding himself one day more ill than usual, he bravely determined to do as we had agreed; and, during a morning visit which I paid him, while he spoke to me with much vivacity, and I entreated him to be silent, and not fatigue himself, he laughing replied—"Speak I must, whether I do or do not please. Do not you recollect I am to confess? This is the moment, as Henry IV. said, in which I must take the dangerous leap; for which reason I have sent for the abbé Gaultier, of whose arrival I am in expectation."

This abbé Gaultier, first, is a poor devil of a priest, who, from goodness of heart, had voluntarily come to M. de Voltaire, some days before his illness, and made an offer, in case of need, of his clerical services; which M. de Voltaire

* M^{re}. le Couvereur was a celebrated actress. T.

had

had accepted, because the man appeared to him more moderate and rational than three or four other of the hooded tribe, who, like the abbé Gaultier, knowing no more than he did of M. de Voltaire, came, unsent for, to preach to him like fanatics, and forbode Hell and God's judgments; and whom the old patriarch had the goodness not to order to be thrown out of the window.

The abbé Gaultier came, was an hour alone with the patient, and left him so well satisfied that he immediately determined to go to the parish-church, in search of what we call the *Bon Dieu**; to which the patient would not consent, "because," said he, "I spit blood, and "I might, unfortunately, happen to spit out "something else." In compliance with the request of the abbé, he gave him his profession of faith, written with his own hand, and in which he declared, "his intention was to die in the "catholic religion, in which belief he was born, "hoping the divine mercy would pardon all his "errors;" and added that, "if he had ever "brought scandal on the church, he asked for- "giveness of God and her." This last article he added at the request of the priest, and, as he said, for the sake of peace.

* The Host. T,

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He gave this profession of faith to the abbé Gaultier, in the presence of his relations, and such of his friends as were in the chamber, by two of whom it was signed, as witnesses. Several of his friends and relations thought, with reason, he had extended his complaisance to the wishes of our holy mother church too far; that he ought to have been contented with a verbal declaration, in the presence of witnesses, that he died a catholic; and that nothing more could have been required, since those anti-religious works which had been imputed to him he had always disowned.

Be this as it may, the curate (or parish-priest) of St. Sulpice, to which parish he belonged, a man of little understanding, and a bigotted fanatic, came the same day to see the patient. He seemed vexed that he had not rather been sent for than a street-corner priest. It was a conversion which he had at heart to make himself, and which had been impolitely purloined from him by an adventurer. He, however, approved the profession of faith which had been presented to him, and of this even gave attestation by writing.

This, sire, is all which passed at that time. In some days, M. de Voltaire was much better, and had strength enough to visit the academy
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and the theatre on the same day. On his arrival at the academy, he found more than two thousand people assembled in the court of the Louvre, who clapped and shouted, *vive M. de Voltaire* *! The academicians came to the entrance of the court, to meet him, in a body; gave him the place of honour, desired him to preside at the assembly, unanimously appointed him director, and, in fine, omitted nothing which could indicate their attention and veneration for their illustrious associate. We were enraptured by his politeness, the charms of his wit, and the various obliging and elegant things he said.

He thence proceeded to the theatre, followed by an innumerable multitude. His reception, when he appeared in the house, and during the whole performance, which was his own tragedy of Irene, was a thing unexampled: to be believed it must have been seen. Enthusiasm and ecstasy were carried to their utmost extent. The actors came into the box in which he was to crown him with laurel, amid the acclamations of the whole audience, who approved with hands and feet, and with the universal cry of bravo! Between the play and the after-piece, the bust of M. de Voltaire was placed upon the stage,

* Much the same as, Voltaire for ever! 'T.

and, in like manner, crowned with laurel, at which the public transport redoubled.

This apotheosis it was which particularly irritated the fanatics. An Ex-jesuit, one of the Lent preachers at Versailles, had the impudence to exclaim against such scandalous proceedings, in presence of the whole court ; but the whole court laughed at him, except some hypocrites, and idiots, who are as plentiful in this country as in any other.

Unfortunately the apotheosis excited the indignation of people more to be feared than fanatics, and who felt that neither their places, credit, nor power, would ever acquire them homage so flattering, from the nation, which was only rendered to genius. In the whole world, and Paris at this moment will say the same, I know not, in the whole world, but one man, who, were he in this metropolis, could have divided with M. de Voltaire the admiration and enthusiasm of the public. Who this man is I will leave your majesty to divine.

M. de Voltaire, who daily continued, at the theatres, at the academy, and in the very streets, to receive homage from his fellow citizens, at length, toward the end of April, fell very seriously ill, by having taken, while he was at his labours, several cups of coffee, which increased the

the strangury to which he was subject. To diminish the pain he felt, he applied to opiates; but he doubled and trebled the dose in such a manner that he never recovered his understanding, except during short intervals.

I visited him in this situation, and he always knew me; he even used some expressions of friendship, but immediately after relapsed into his stupor; for he was in a continual slumber. He awoke only to complain, and to say he was come to die at Paris. The abbé Mignot, his nephew, a member of the grand council, went to the curate of St. Sulpice, who told him that, since M. de Voltaire had lost his recollection, it was useless for him to visit him; but that he declared, if M. de Voltaire did not make a public, solemn, and most circumstantial reparation for the offence of which he had been the cause, he could not in conscience bury him in consecrated ground. In vain did the nephew reply that his uncle, when in the full possession of his faculties, had made his profession of faith, the authenticity of which the curate himself had acknowledged; that he had always disowned the works which had been imputed to him; yet, that he had complied so far, with the ministers of the church, as to declare that, if he had given any cause of offence, he asked pardon. The curate answered,
this

this was not sufficient ; M. de Voltaire was notoriously known to be the declared enemy of religion, and he could not, without committing himself with the clergy and the archbishop, grant him christian burial. The abbé Mignot threatened to apply to the parliament for justice, which he said he hoped to obtain, having such authentic proofs in his possession. The curate, conscious of support, replied, he must act as he thought proper.

All the friends of M. de Voltaire were of opinion that his family ought to apply to the laws ; and it was loudly affirmed that the magistrates, who had so often caused the sacraments and christian burial to be granted to Janfenists, could not, in common justice, refuse the same favour to M. de Voltaire, after the declaration he had made. But his family, in spite of these remonstrances, stood in awe of the parliament, the members of which had no affection for M. de Voltaire, because of the epigrams to be found in his works against that body, which, in this case, would not have been favourable to his cause. The public thought otherwise ; and affirmed the parliament must, under such circumstances, have ceded to the general voice in their own despite ; and there were, beside, a great number of magistrates, especially among the
youthful

youthful class, and some even of the aged, who seemed to be very well disposed. Notwithstanding all these reasons, the fears of his relations prevailed; and they remained in a state of inaction, which the public has very much disapproved.

On Saturday, May 30, the day of his decease, the abbé Gaultier once more offered his services, some hours before the fatal moment, in a letter he wrote to the abbé Mignot. The latter immediately sent in search of the abbé Gaultier, and the curate of St. Sulpice, who came together. The curate approached the dying man, and pronounced the name of Jesus Christ, at which M. de Voltaire, who continued in a dosing state, opened his eyes, and made a motion with his hand, as if to bid the curate begone, saying—"Let me die in peace." The curate, more moderate and rational, on this occasion, than was in character for him to be, turned to the persons present, and said—"You see, gentlemen, he is not in his senses;" though the reverse, at this moment, was the fact; but, as you may well imagine, first, every person took care not to contradict the curate.

The man under the hood then retired, and, by what he said to the family, he was weak enough to unmask himself, and clearly to prove that his whole conduct was an act of vanity.

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He told them they had acted improperly in sending for the abbé Gaultier, who had spoiled every thing; that they should have addressed themselves to him alone, for the patient was one of his flock; that they should have left him *in private* with the dying man, and then *he would have taken care of every thing*.

He nevertheless persisted in refusing christian burial, and would only give his consent in writing that M. de Voltaire might be removed. Had the profession of faith been given to the curate, he would certainly have been more flexible. He would have regarded it as a trophy of victory, gained by him over the patriarch of unbelievers; but, as this profession had been given to a poor hackney parson, the archbishop and the curate rather chose to affirm it was ironical, than to leave the honour of such a victory to such a priest.

M. de Voltaire expired at eleven of the clock in the evening, after uttering a few more words with difficulty, and after having shewn, during his sickness, as much tranquillity of mind as his situation would permit, though he seemed to regret life. I visited him on the eve of his death, and, after some expressions of friendship to him, he replied by squeezing my hand, and saying—
“ You are my consolation.”—I was so much affected

fectcd to see him thus, and he had so much difficulty to express himself, even in monosyllables, that I was unable longer to continue a spectator of such a scene. The image of this great man, dying, excited emotions so strong, and fixed itself so powerfully on my imagination, that it never can be effaced. It gave birth to the most melancholy reflections on the non-entity of life and fame, and the misery of man.

Twenty-four hours after his death, he was embalmed, put into a carriage, wrapped in a morning-gown, and carried, by the abbé Mignot, and some other relations, to the abbey of Scellières, thirty leagues from Paris, of which the abbé Mignot is the incumbent. Here, on Tuesday, the second of June, he was interred, with great ceremony, amid a concourse of people, assembled from all the country round. The prior of the abbey, a good benedictine monk, who knew nothing of what had passed at Paris, made not the least difficulty of performing the ceremony, after having seen the proofs which were presented by the abbé Mignot.

Twenty-four hours after, on Wednesday the third, the prior received a letter from the bishop of Troyes, in whose diocese the abbey of Scellières is situated, forbidding him to inhumc the body, if the rites of burial had not yet been performed.

formed. The letter of the prior to the bishop, in reply, was very firm, and very respectful. He stated the reasons of his conduct, which he so well justified that, it is affirmed, the prelate himself allowed no objection could be made. It seems, the bishop, who is really a good man, but governed by a devout and bigotted sister, and urged to act by the archbishop of Paris, had, contrary to his own inclination, written to the prior of Scellières; and had taken measures that his letter should arrive after the interment. The poor prior, who was threatened with ruin, repaired to Paris, and gave his reasons; and it is hoped he will be left in peace. I have been assured, and the thing is very possible, that the archbishop of Paris had consulted a learned casuist, to know whether the body of Voltaire might not be taken up; and that the canonist replied they must beware of such an act, for nothing could be more contrary to rule.

Let not your majesty, however, for the honour of the nation imagine that all the devout, or even all the bishops, approve the abominable manner in which this great man has been treated. Among other prelates whom I might mention, the archbishop of Lyons, brother to that Montazet who served in the Austrian army during the last war, a man who does not fear being
accused

accused of too much lenity, since he is supposed to be a Janсениst, has openly affirmed he could not comprehend the reason of the conduct of the curate of St. Sulpice and the archbishop of Paris; that nothing was more contrary to the laws and the constant usage of the church; and that burial ought not to be refused, except to those who were notoriously excommunicated, and who, when dying, gave formal signs of impiety, which M. de Voltaire had not done. Several curates of Paris think the same, and would certainly have interred him, in despite of the archbishop, had he died in any one of their parishes. The curate of St. Etienne du Mont, among others, has publicly asserted that he would have buried him in his church, between Racine and Pascal, who there lie entombed. In fine, all the truly religious, that is to say, those who do not make devotion a party matter, and a pretext for acting with importance, and becoming the subjects of public remark, unanimously blame the fanaticism of the curate and the archbishop.

I speak not of the remainder of the nation, for I cannot express to your majesty the indignation that has been excited by all these transactions; and it would be very unjust to render men responsible for, who certainly would have prevented,

prevented, or repressed, such infamous proceedings, had they had the power. The ministry, who have permitted an abomination so dishonourable to France, and have suffered the priests on this occasion to act as they thought proper, pay no attention to the influence and power which have been given the clergy by this step; who imagine they are hereafter at liberty to grant or to refuse burial as they please.

The French Academy has not yet been able to obtain, in favour of M. de Voltaire, the mass which it is customary to perform, on the loss of any one of its members; nor, in despite of its solicitations, will it probably obtain this favour; the refusal of which is a new outrage committed on the memory of the great man whom we regret. Men of letters, however, all do him so much justice that no man has yet dared to offer himself as his successor; and there is every reason to believe no election will suddenly take place; it ought never, indeed; and, if my opinion be followed, the place will be left vacant.

This, sir, is the relation which you have done me the honour to demand. Though I have only obeyed your orders, I fear lest I should have abused the permission you have granted me, fully to unbosom myself on this sorrowful occasion, and the revolting consequences past
and

and present. Would you believe that the Journalists have all been severely forbidden to speak a single word, in honour of M. de Voltaire ! That they are not even permitted to mention his name ! That the players have been prohibited, during almost a month, from acting any of his pieces ; and that this prohibition is but just taken off !

I should have much to say on the subject, were it not prudent to keep silence. The letter with which your majesty has honoured me was necessary to my heart, to alleviate the grief and indignation into which I am plunged. Were I twenty years younger, I would unregretted forsake a country in which genius is treated with so much indignity, both alive and dead ; but I am sixty years of age, and too old to change my lodging. I, however, console myself by the interest which your majesty is pleased to take in the loss which literature, philosophy, France, and Europe itself have suffered ; of which I shall inform all who are worthy to hear and capable of feeling it, and which I will venture to say M. de Voltaire deserved, not only because of his uncommon genius, but of his admiration of your majesty. You, sire, were often the subject of our discourse. He loved and honoured your person, and regarded you as the resource and

hope of truth and reason. It would, sire, be an act worthy of yourself were you to render him, in your capital, and your academy, those honours which his country have refused. It is for the greatest king in Europe, a king who is formed to become an example to others, to honour the memory of this great man by some solemn act, which will console philosophy, put France to the blush, and confound fanaticism.

You have at present interests too great to treat of for me to intrude upon your time, concerning other subjects; but your majesty will live, and will no doubt soon enjoy some intervals of repose, when I shall take the liberty again to speak of our common loss, of the interest you were pleased to take in it, and of what you shall think proper to do, in honour of that genius that is now no more.

I conclude my letter by presenting, with increasing ardour, all my wishes in your majesty's favour, and all those which the French nation, at this time, make for you, your preservation, your happiness, and your glory, and that you may remain the arbitrator and saviour of Germany. Never was your majesty more respectable, or more dear to Europe.

These sentiments are deeply engraven on my heart, as are the eternal gratitude, the profound
admira-

admiration, and the tender veneration, with which I shall, to my last sigh, &c.

P. S. I have been so intent on the subject of M. de Voltaire, in my letter, that I had almost forgotten to notice another loss, which your majesty has lately suffered, in the person of the respectable lord marshal, whose virtues your majesty honoured, and who well merited the regret you feel, from the tender veneration in which he held you. We are told he died with the most philosophic tranquillity, at which I am not surprised. He honoured me with his friendship, the worth of which I felt. I daily lose some friend or other, and new friendships are not made at my age; but your majesty lives, and your life induces me to support my own.

I forgot to inform your majesty that M. de Voltaire, at one of the visits paid him by his curate, gave twenty-five guineas for the poor of the parish, which the priest, with great complaisance accepted, but refused to inter him, notwithstanding. One might say to him, as *Cbicanneau** does to the porter of his judge, who receives the purse of the pleader, and shuts the door in his face—"Nay, then, give me back my money."

* A character in *Les Plaideurs*, or, *The Pleaders*, a comedy, by Racine. T.

But the church is like the lion's den in the fable
—"All go in, but none come out."

I likewise forgot to inform your majesty that a curate of Paris, whose name I have not learned, being asked in what manner he would have behaved, had M. de Voltaire died in his parish, replied,—“I would have solemnly interred him, and have written an epitaph for him, to which I would have added his profession of faith.”—

This would have been acting like a man of sense, as the curate no doubt is. The epitaph would have remained a trophy for the church, and a proof of the recantation, real or apparent, of the errors of M. de Voltaire, to posterity. It is inconceivable that the curate of St. Sulpice and the archbishop did not think thus, and did not perceive the advantages they might have drawn from this profession of faith, instead of confessing themselves vanquished, and treated ironically, by regarding it as the act of derision. But, God be thanked, the enemies of reason are as foolish as they are fanatical. They would be too formidable did they add understanding to the influence which they have acquired over folly. They have, however, had the wit to persuade most kings that they are the support of royal authority, and have artfully profited by the absurdity

furdity of the author of the *Système de la Nature*, by whom this doctrine has been stupidly advanced. Had this bad philosopher read ecclesiastical history, he would have seen that priests, far from being the support of kings, have, in all ages, been their enemies; that it was not their fault that the Bourbons were not deprived of the throne which was legitimately theirs; and that, when they tell kings they derive power from God, it is not that they mean to submit to that power, but, on the contrary, to subject kings to their own, since they pretend they are God's earthly representatives.

II. P. S. I have again perused my own, and again read your majesty's letter for the twentieth time, which will not be the last, and which is well worthy of being a part of the epitaph of Voltaire, instead of his profession of faith. I perceive, a little too late, I have not noticed a passage in that excellent letter, in which your majesty says—"Perhaps the old patriarch would still have been alive, had he returned to Ferney." Alas! Sire, I think the same, and am persuaded that the fatiguing and agitated life he led, at Paris, considerably shortened his days. I was strongly of opinion he ought to have returned to Ferney, at the beginning of the fine weather, there peaceably to have enjoyed the

homage that had been paid him at Paris, But his niece, who was weary of Ferney, persuaded him to the contrary ; and several of his friends were of the same opinion, fearing that, should he ever return to his retreat, the priests would obtain an order to oblige him there to remain. They had endeavoured to bring him into trouble, on his return to Paris, by asserting it was without permission ; but it was demonstrated that he never was forbidden to return, and they prudently thought proper to suffer him to enjoy his fame in peace.

For my own part, when I heard of the almost sudden project he had formed to come to Paris, and that he was actually on the road, I was greatly afflicted ; not doubting but that he came thither to seek persecution and death. I was, to my great satisfaction, deceived in the first conjecture, and his splendid and solemn apotheosis consoled me for his journey ; but, unfortunately, my forebodings were too true, relative to the fatal and irreparable consequence of this imprudent and hasty step. His physician has said that, had he remained at Ferney, he might have lived ten years longer. In effect, the vital principle was so strong in him that his illness was long, and painful. At eighty-four, he had all the fire of youth ; and, when the abbé Delille

read

read a translation in verse to him, of one of the epistles of Pope, M. de Voltaire astonished and enchanted us all, by his presence of mind and memory, recollecting at each French verse the corresponding line from Pope, though perhaps it was thirty years since he had read the poem. His tragedy of Irene is neither equal to Zaire nor Mahomet; but it is much superior to any modern tragedy. I am told your majesty has requested a copy from his relations, who no doubt will take a pleasure, and think it a duty, to procure you one. You will find exceedingly fine lines in this piece, worthy of the author's best days; some good scenes, and the character of a father which is excellently written. When the author fell ill, he intended to have committed it to the press, and to have dedicated it to the academy.

I once again ask a thousand pardons of your majesty, for having thus abused your time and patience, by this enormous letter, or rather volume. You will not read it, if, as I suspect, you have something better to do. You will throw such idle prattling into the fire, if as I fear such prattling should weary you; but I should prefer this danger to that of not affording you such a feeble proof of my zeal, by executing your commands, and of the pleasure I take in every thing

which I think can be agreeable to your majesty. Thus predisposed, I entreat you to be pleased to accept this letter, at the end of which I once more take the liberty to renew all the sentiments of gratitude, admiration, and profound respect, with which I shall, during life, &c.

While folding my letter, I am told that a very able artist has made a sketch, in *terra cotta*, which perfectly resembles the man whose memory we regret. Should your majesty wish to have one in marble, I will give orders to the artist.

Paris, July 3.

L E T T E R CLXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, August 16; the anniversary
of the Battle of Lignitz,

THE two last letters, with which your majesty has honoured me, dated the 22d and 23d of July*, arrived only the day before

* The letters here referred to, and various others mentioned by D'Alembert, since the offence taken by the king, in Letter CLXIV. are omitted; perhaps purposely, by the editors of Berlin, perhaps because they were not to be found. T.
yesterday,

yesterday, and have been three weeks on their route. I lose not a moment to answer the questions your majesty has been pleased to ask, on the subject of the great man whom we have lost.

I do not believe he uttered the bon mot, to the marshal de Richelieu, which is attributed to him—"Ah! brother Cain, thou hast slain me!" I was exceedingly assiduous in my visits, during his illness; I several times met the marshal at his house, but I never heard this expression; nor did any of his family and friends, to their knowledge. I own it is a pleasant one, very like such as he often spoke, and that the marshal is still more like brother Cain. But apparently it was the invention of some person who believed the patriarch had been poisoned, by the opium which had been given him by the marshal, which is not true. Opium had really been given, but the bottle was broken, by the carelessness of the servants, and none of it taken.

Some days before his illness, he certainly drank much coffee, that he might work with greater assiduity, on the various subjects on which he employed himself, among which was the correction of his tragedy. He heated his
blood,

blood, lost his sleep, suffered much from his strangury, and to alleviate these feelings swallowed opium in excess, which he sent for himself, and which probably ended his life.

When he fell ill, I know that he was at work on the prophecies of Daniel, but I know not how far he had proceeded. I am also certain that, at the requisition of the empress of Russia, he had begun and written some pages of her history.

His relations have agreed with a foreign book-feller for his manuscripts; but, as they are all sealed up at Ferney, there is no knowing their number, which is suspected to be small, for he sent his works to the press as soon as they were written. He loved to enjoy, and not idly to bury his talent,

The empress of Russia has bought his library, which consists of ten thousand volumes, in a great number of which there are said to be notes, written by his own hand. The sovereign proposes to place this library in a small temple, which she means to build for that purpose, and in the centre of which she will erect a monument to his honour.

The monument, sire, will not be equal to the eulogium which your majesty intends to write,

on

on that great man, and which will bring a fine line written by himself to recollection.

Le grand Condé pleurant au vers du grand Corneille.*

From this eulogium, fire, others will spring, which will be unequal to the model imitated. Men of letters, following you, will but cast in the widow's mite.

The French academy has not yet thought of choosing a successor to M. de Voltaire. It is too much embarrassed at present by the subject, which will be delayed as long as possible. It is vexatious to recollect that the successor of Voltaire must be welcomed by a priest, who was director at the time this great man died. His fellow members will exert themselves to say all that the hooded gentleman shall omit to say. Wherefore should their hands and tongues be tied? We continually wish a mass should be said for him, but have little hope of obtaining our wishes. We may each of us parody the line from an opera, and say—

Ab, j'attendrai long-temps, la messe est loin encore†!

I know not whether I have had the honour to inform you that a very able artist of this country,

* The great Condé weeping at the verse of the great Corneille.

† Still must I wait, for far off is the mass.

named

named Houdon, already known by several fine works, has executed a magnificent bust of the patriarch, perfectly resembling him, in *terra cotta*, till marble shall come *. It will be worthy to find a place in the cabinet of your majesty, and of being bestowed on the academy of Berlin. The following four excellent lines have been written on Voltaire.

*Celui que, dans Athènes, eût adoré la Grèce,
Que, dans Rome, à sa table, Auguste eût fait asseoir,
Nos Césars d'aujourd'hui n'ont pas voulu le voir ;
Et monsieur de Beaumont lui refuse une messe†.*

This monsieur de Beaumont is the worthy fanatic archbishop whom Paris has the good fortune to possess.

My desire to answer your majesty's questions has prevented me from dwelling on the ardent prayers of all France for your prosperity, on the glory by which you are continually crowned, on the example you afford to other sovereigns, and on all the sublime qualities which, for this last six months, you have displayed, as negotia-

* D'Alembert means till some one shall be at the expence of a marble bust. T,

† The man whom at Athens Greece would have adored, who at Rome would have been the guest of Augustus, our modern Cæsars have refused to see; nor would monsieur Beaumont grant him a mass,

tor, warrior, and king. May you long continue to give our modern Cæsars fimilar lessons !

I am, with the most profound respect, the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXIV.

From the King.

Undated.

I PROFIT by the departure of colonel Grimm, who is in the Russian service, but on his return to France, to send you a short Essay on Government. I have taken off but six copies, one of which I submit to your censure. The subject is itself of great extent. I have contracted it because it is better to excite ideas in the mind of the reader than to overwhelm him by a repetition of known principles, as is so frequently the practice. Should the author merit the approbation of Anaxagoras, his ambition will be fully gratified. The bearer will tell you the rest. May Anaxagoras long be preserved ! May his peace of mind completely cicatrize the wounds of his heart ; and may his magnanimity, rising superior to every adverse stroke of fate,

fate, enable him to enjoy the happy apathy of the stoics!

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, October 9, 1778.

THE kind expressions and consolatory sentiments of your majesty, in behalf of my deceased illustrious friend, and of your love for talents and genius, I have received with the warmest gratitude. They are equally honourable to the memory of this great man and to letters. I wish all the learned in Europe were to read what your majesty has been pleased to write to me, on this subject, calculated as your letter is to encourage and console those who seek, like you, but with much inferior abilities, to allay, by meditation and study, the ills of life, the infirmities of human nature, and the misfortunes occasioned by persecution and calumny. I most impatiently wait the immortal monument * which

* Meaning the eulogium which the king intended to write. T

your majesty proposes to erect to the glory of him for whom we weep. The French academy has just paid him such honours as never were paid before. Agreeable to the proposition I made, and which was accepted with applause by all my fellow members, the subject for the prize poem of the ensuing year is to be the eulogium of M. de Voltaire; and, that the prize may be more considerable, I have requested the academy to accept the sum of six hundred livres (five and twenty pounds sterling) which will double the prize, and which I give like the widow's mite. I have farther given the academy a very fine bust of M. de Voltaire, the resemblance of which is very great, and the only one we yet have in the hall in which we assemble. The bust is indeed but *terra cotta*, for I am not rich enough to bestow one in marble; but I had the pleasure to see it placed in the hall, at the public sitting of the 25th of August, and honoured by the applauses and tears of the whole assembly.

At this meeting I read an eulogium on Crebilon, in which I found several occasions to speak of his illustrious vanquisher, never failing to do justice to the vanquished. The public appeared to be satisfied with the transactions of this meeting, and I hope the prize proposed will be approved

proved of by your majesty. We shall not receive the pieces before next August, nor will the poetry then sent be equal to your prose. I wish earnestly to see the close of the campaign, which, as I am informed by letter, is very fatiguing to your majesty. I pray still more earnestly to see an end to the war, which you could not avoid, and the motive for undertaking which covers you with glory. May the approaching winter inspire your enemies with more reasonable and more pacific propensities !

M. de Catt will send your majesty an eulogium on La Motte, which I have been asked to write for a journal, and which I believe contains sound reflections, on the writings of that author. I shall be highly flattered, should this morsel merit your majesty's suffrage.

You have received, or will soon receive, a very learned medical treatise, the author of which, M. Barthès, has entreated me to lay it at your majesty's feet, and to request the title of academician of Berlin, of which, by his talents and his labours, he is worthy.

M. de Rougemont is in pain, lest your majesty should not have received the last letter he had the honour to write, and requests your majesty would kindly be pleased to honour him with a short answer. He is a very honest man,

very

very much attached to your majesty, and very worthy of your favours.

I shall not detain your majesty, by a relation of all the follies which are acted, said, and read, or rather not read, in the city I inhabit. I shall only inform you that there are men vile enough, and unfortunately for them in great numbers, loudly to exclaim against the subject of the prize proposed by the academy; and that the curates of Paris wished to present a petition, to government, on the subject; but silence has been imposed upon them, by administration.

I am, with the most lively gratitude, and most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

I HERE send you the eulogium on Voltaire, half minuted down in the camp, and half corrected in winter quarters. I fear the French Academy will criticise the style. But how is it possible to speak the language of the Gauls, in all its purity, in Bohemia? I have done my best; the work is not worthy of the man it means to

celebrate, but I have profited by my liberty, and have publicly declaimed that at Berlin which few dare whisper in Paris. In this the whole merit of the work consists. Your eulogium on La Motte is no doubt superior to my scribbling, except that my subject is richer than yours.

M. Rougemont must already have been paid the last penny to which he has any claim. With respect to the war we are now making, I know not very well what to say. I consider myself as an instrument in the hands of fate, employed in the chain of causes, but as an instrument that knows neither the purpose nor the result of the operations into which he is obliged to enter. This is a sincere confession, such as politicians and generals rarely make, but very conformable to the turn which the plans of so many other statesmen, my predecessors, have taken, and the catastrophe of which, as history informs us, has been exceedingly different from the original projects they had conceived. However ponderous the burthen of war may be, for my old age, I will bear it cheerfully, provided I can but consolidate the future peace and tranquillity of Germany, by my labours. The mind must be roused to oppose the tyrannical principles of an arbitrary government, and curb the unmeasured ambition which knows no limits,

except

except those of a power sufficient to oppose its progress. We must therefore fight; when and how often time must tell. This is the language of a news-writer, which may be variously applied; but, happen what will, I pray God take you to &c.*

L E T T E R CLXXVII.

From the King.

January 29, 1779.

I HAVE been much astonished that a philosopher, who busies himself with things, should desire me, who only arrange words, to send him syllables measured by the foot, and perhaps even falsely measured. Mallebranche despised poetry; Newton I believe held it in little esteem; and Copernicus held the ephemerides of Ptolemy in greater estimation than the Iliad and Æneid. What impression can fiction make on a mind in love with truth? But such a mind cannot always be kept on the full stretch. After great efforts relaxation must have its turn. Be-

* This letter is erroneously numbered and placed in the Berlin and Basil editions; in the latter it is number CLXXV. T.

side, those who have made some stay at Ferney may be supposed to be reconciled to poetry.

Thus did I reason; reflection followed, and I said to myself—"Didst thou write verse like
"Voltaire, thou mightest boldly send thy poetry
"even to Diagoras; but thine are the abortions
"of a feeble imagination, and of one ignorant
"of the language of the Gauls."

I stopped, was undecided, nay discouraged. A moment after, I reflected on the manner in which those who act what are called great parts are managed, and thus continued—"We are
"treated like children. When we scarcely list,
"we are told our eloquence equals that of Cicero. If we can place a rhyme at the end of
"a few syllables, the extent of our genius is astonishing; and, if we can but set one foot before the other, we are more active than rope-dancers. Be gone then, Chinese epistle, in
"search of Diagoras, and collect praises for thy
"author." On which, off went the epistle, and will be remitted to you.

I expect you will judge of it as the defunct abbé Trublai did of a sermon, of which his opinion was asked. "I did not," said he, "hear
"a word of mathematics in the whole discourse." Should the verses weary you, remember you have to thank yourself, for have them you would.

I am

I am still more astonished at the proposition you make, that I should put a certain dream in rhyme *. To do this would be very difficult; and, as it was but a folly of the imagination, it is to be feared that it would not preserve the same rapidity in verse as in prose. Rhyme is a very terrible thing, and the best poets are obliged to have recourse to lame and superfluous lines, which they conceal as well as they can, but which fail not to render a work more tedious than it would be in prose †. Beside I hear that at present they write tragedies at Paris without rhyme, and that poetry is in danger of being proscribed. I therefore think it would be better to put my verse in prose than my prose in verse; at least unless, by an edict from your new ministers, poetry should be preserved in its ancient municipal rights.

I suppose you have by this received a bundle of metaphysical wrangling, from which you will not learn much. But what can be learned of a science the interpreters of which are vague and unintelligible words? Of metaphysics it may be said

* This letter is at so great a distance from its proper place that the error in the date was not soon enough perceived. It ought to follow letter LXXI. and to be dated 1771. T.

† The very reverse of this is the characteristic of good poetry. T.

that it was created purposely to combat monsters. But the various explanations of the enigmas of nature do not affect our good humour, and things proceed in their accustomed train, You mention the telescopes of * * * †, and I suppose the calculations according to which they are constructed are admirable; but the fact is I wished to make use of them but could not see through them.

I judge, from the style of your letter, that your health is recovered, and that the journey has not been ineffectual. Continue in good health, and rest persuaded of the part I take in whatever relates to you.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, April 30, 1779.

THE baron von Goltz has been pleased to undertake to remit to your majesty a feeble monument, which I have lately erected to the memory of the virtuous and respectable lord

† Of Beguelin, as is evident from the letters of D'Alembert. T.

marshal.

marshal*. I shall be highly flattered, should the eulogium obtain the suffrage of your majesty. I have there endeavoured to paint with truth the worthy lord who is the subject of it; and I shall at least have the satisfaction, if not to succeed, to have expressed the sentiments of respect, and admiration, with which I so long have been penetrated, for the philosophic hero who honoured this true sage with his friendship. I know not whether your majesty have received the volume of academic eulogiums, which I three months since addressed to M. de Catri. I have had no news of its arrival; though, as soon as it came from the press, I did not lose a moment to send the volume to your majesty. I have endeavoured in them to estimate and depict the talents of the men of whom I had to speak; and to impart as much variety as I was able, to what related to their characters and genius. The work has been received favourably enough; but the applause of others is nothing to me, should I not have the happiness to obtain that of your majesty.

* To call writing an eulogium erecting a monument is, or is very like, a Gallicism; but the metaphor in the original is here, and in some other places, so positive as not with propriety to be avoided. In the style of the poet, indeed, it is far from a blemish in English. T.

When I sent the eulogium on the lord marshal, I had the honour to write a short letter, at a time that I was ill of a fever and scarcely could hold a pen. I am at present better, though still feeble. I have long wished for the arrival of the hour in which I might venture to congratulate your majesty, on the conclusion of peace. The public papers have often affirmed this great affair would soon be brought to a period, yet it does not appear yet to be finished; but, from what I hear, I believe it to be sufficiently advanced no longer to doubt that Germany will at length enjoy a happiness so great. For this she will be wholly indebted to your majesty, whose fame is now more than ever great. What a life and what a reign! Such is the unanimous exclamation of Europe. Never had the most beautiful drama a more beautiful fifth act! May this fifth act still continue many years! This I hope as much as I wish it, for the good of Europe, the example of kings, the felicity of Germany, and the honour of philosophy and letters. They have more than ever need of a chief and a protector like you; others they have none to hope. Do but live, sire, and you are sufficient.

Your majesty has rendered an honour to the manes of Voltaire which effaces all they have received. I take the liberty to send you a short discourse

discourse, which I pronounced before the academicians, on the day of the reception of his successor. At the bottom of the tenth page, your majesty will perceive I have obliquely hinted, which hint was well understood by my audience, at the refusal of the priests to bury Voltaire, and Moliere, in what we call holy ground; and, though this honour was finally granted them, it was granted with a tolerably ill grace.

I know not whether I have had the honour to inform your majesty that a very able statuary of the academy, named Houdon, has made a bust of Voltaire, the execution and resemblance of which are perfect. Should your majesty desire to have this bust, let me entreat you to give me your orders, which it shall be my duty to execute with equal zeal and promptitude.

Receive, sire, with your usual bounty, the assurance of the sincere and profound sentiments with which I am devoted to your majesty; the lively gratitude which I owe you, the admiration with which I am penetrated, and the tender veneration with which I shall, to my last sigh, remain, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R CLXXIX.

From the King.

June 6, 1779.

I HAVE received your two letters, with an eulogium on some academicians, and the short work which you have consecrated to the memory of the lord marshal, for which I thank you. I have not had time to read the whole, because I am but just arrived. My mind, still sullied by the mingled puddle of politics and finance, must be purified, by lawful ablution, in the waters of Hippocrene, previous to presenting itself at the court of Apollo, before the nine muses, or to meditate on works like yours. Grant me but this short delay, and I will then enter more fully into the subject than I can at present.

My poor brain has been agitated by storms, during fourteen months, which have effaced all traces of the arts, and deranged my ideas by a multitude of regulations, speculations, negotiations, and affairs of every kind, with which I have of necessity been occupied. The impetuous Boreas and the raging Auster have been calmed, by a stroke from the trident of the French Neptune, and of his sage ministry; but, though

though the waves of my long-agitated mind no longer rise to the clouds, the surface of the waters is and will continue to be disturbed, till it shall be allayed by a perfect calm. Here is a simile which would read much better in an ode than in a letter; but I know not what to do, my dear geometrician; you must be obliged to digest this common-place comparison, because I know not, at present, what better to substitute. I grow so old, and am so worn, that I am no longer good for any one thing on earth. Each man is not a Fontenelle, a Voltaire, nor even equal to the good deceased lord marshal, who preserved his powers and vivacity of mind in a much more advanced age than that of Condé, and Marlborough, who doated on the brink of the grave. I shall soon doat like them, and like Swift, whom his servants shewed for money. Don Joseph will say he well deserved his fate.

Joseph! Joseph! Eternally Joseph, to a mathematician, who troubles himself as little concerning the insects that devour each other, on this ridiculous globe, as he does concerning us idiots of the fifth satellite of Saturn.

But I wish to speak a word on the bust of Voltaire; and how shall I journey from Saturn to the poet? What transition will lead from one to the other? Truly that is more than I can say,
yet

yet do I address myself to the secretary of the French Academy, who, with some purist, some successor to D'Olivet, will exclaim—"That man knows not how to write; and Bouhours rightly said the atmosphere of mind extends from the Garonne to the Moselle, beyond which there is no common sense."—For the present I stand reprov'd, and abashed. Time must place me in my proper rank, if time have the power; and you must regard me with indulgent eyes, and come hither to see me, if so you it suits.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, July 2, 1772.

WHEN I had the honour last to write to your majesty, the peace which you have just so gloriously bestowed on Germany was near a conclusion; and from that moment I thought myself authorised to testify to your majesty all the joy I felt, at an event at once so fortunate for Europe, so precious to your people, and so

Honourable to yourself. I now once more take the liberty to renew the same sentiments, and to express the admiration which I had the felicity to partake, with all who hear the name of your majesty pronounced; admiration as universal as it is just; for never was monarch more generally revered, by the public, than you are at this moment. Of all nations, France is that which betokens the most ardent applause; so great, so prodigious, so general, is the enthusiasm!

It has been said, I know not why, that your majesty will make a tour to Paris. I dare affirm you would there receive the most splendid honours you have ever enjoyed, and of these I should have the pleasure to be a witness before I quit this gloomy world, which would then justly appear to me the best of all possible worlds. But I much fear, sire, I must renounce so sweet a hope, or rather so pleasing a dream; as I am obliged to renounce, at least this year, the desire I have once again to lay all the sentiments of respect, and admiration, with which I have so long been penetrated, at your majesty's feet. The feeble state of my health, which daily declines, and which scarcely permits me to use any mental and still less bodily labour, deprives me of a satisfaction so dear to my heart.

For

For this I will console myself, as much as possible, by conversing with all I meet on the renown of your majesty; by incessantly recollecting, with the most lively gratitude, the bounty with which you so long have honoured me; and particularly by learning that your health is better than ever, so as to afford Europe a long promise of an exemplary life of glory, genius, and virtue.

I dare not ask your majesty to interrupt your affairs, and employ your precious moments, to glance at the volume of academic learning, which I have had the honour to send. Should you deign to open it, you would at least there find the most sincere proofs of the gratitude and veneration which I owe you. I know not by what fatality it has been received so late; I sent it the moment it came from the press. It remained, contrary to my expectations, three full months at Berlin, and was not given to your majesty, till your return. This was too late to express my own obligations to you, though perhaps too soon for my own interest, which may suffer by the judgment you may pass on this rhapsody, should you but for a moment deign to pay it any attention.

Perhaps your majesty knows that the French Academy has proposed an eulogium on Voltaire,

as a poetical subject for the prize ; and that I have had the good fortune to render homage, on this occasion, to the memory of my friend, by doubling the prize. We are to read and judge the rival pieces. May they be worthy of the subject ! We have but one eulogium more to propose, and this I leave your majesty to divine. I only wish circumstances would permit us to offer so fine a subject to our poets, for the exercise of their talents.

Your majesty has been pleased to mention the bust of Voltaire. This bust is a great likeness, made by a very able sculptor, and worthy to adorn the cabinet of your majesty, or the hall of the academy. Should your majesty have any orders to give me, on this subject, I shall execute them with equal zeal and pleasure.

We are not happy enough to enjoy, like your majesty, the sweets of peace ; for these we must be contented to wait. May our wishes for its approach soon be gratified !

I conclude by asking pardon of your majesty, for having so long wearied you, with my loquacity. I can but renew my prayers for your happiness, fame, and preservation ; and lay at your feet all the sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and tender and profound reverence, with which I shall, to the last day of life, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CLXXXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, September 19, 1779:

I AM returned from the country, where I have passed about three weeks, to repose after exertion; which, from certain circumstances, has been rather excessive, and am in haste to answer the kind letter your majesty has written, for which I return my most humble and tender thanks. I am, at the same time, good Frenchman enough, and attached to your majesty with sufficient sincerity, to perceive with great pleasure your sentiments, relative to our ministry, and the union which appears to be established between the two courts. I have always thought that an alliance between France and your majesty was a state natural to both powers; that it was only for a time interrupted, by the hatred of a woman, who wished to be revenged, for the just contempt in which she was held by your majesty, and by the ambition of a priest who was a wit, and would be a cardinal; and I now
with

with great joy see that France may say, like Roxana,

Et que tout rentre ici dans l'ordre accoutumée.*

The French cannot be your enemies, like as you do not wish to be theirs. Independent of political interest, the admiration and respect with which the whole nation is penetrated, for your majesty, are inexpressible. Men are never weary of the praises due to the firm, noble, and courageous conduct of your majesty, in the late important affairs that agitated Germany. I have so often mentioned this that I fear lest repetition should assume the form of adulation; but no man can accuse himself of such a practice who is but the echo of the public voice, and never was it so unanimous,* and so energetic, relative to your majesty, as it is at the present moment.

How great would have been my satisfaction personally to have expressed these sentiments, had my disordered machine permitted me to hazard the fatigues of a long and painful journey! Never did I feel so strong a desire to go and throw myself at your majesty's feet; but I fear I could not have strength to travel so far. Yet can I not wholly renounce the hope of

* Henceforth be all in its accustomed order. A line from the Bajazet of Racine.

seeing and hearing you; and if, in my present feeble state, I should find some interval of strength, I will instantly profit by it, to satisfy the wish of my heart.

We have adjudged the prize of the French Academy for the eulogium of Voltaire, to which I added six hundred livres; that, with the widow's mite, I might honour the memory of my illustrious friend. The poem which gained the prize abounds with excellent lines. The author refused to own himself, and ceded the medal to the piece which gained the *Accessit**, and which likewise had much merit. The anonymous person is supposed to be M. de la Harpe.

The French Academy possesses the bust of Voltaire, which I before had the honour to mention. The gift was mine, but as I am not rich it is only in *terra cotta*. Your majesty may have it in marble when you please; the price is a thousand crowns. Should you think proper to send me your commands, they will be executed with all haste. Perhaps you may wish for two, one for yourself and another for the academy, where the bust would certainly be received with all the sentiments due to the donor, and the original. I forgot to inform your ma-

* The second prize. T.

jeſty that this buſt is executed in two different ways. The likenefs of both is great. The one is according to the antique, with the head bare; the other with a perruque, which is not ſo pictureſque, but which at the ſame time greatly adds to the exactneſs of the reſemblance. That which I gave the academy is in the laſt manner.

Your remarks are but too well founded on the general decline of letters, and the void left by the death of Voltaire. But ſuch is the fate of humanity! When our literature even ſhall revive, I doubt it will be long before it will produce a man ſo uncommon, and who ſhall unite talents ſo various in ſo high a degree. While Frederic ſhall live, Europe may conſole herſelf by the poſſeſſion of one great man. Live long therefore, ſire, and long enjoy your own glory, the admiration of Europe, and the benedictions of Germany.

I am, with the moſt tender veneration, the moſt lively gratitude, &c.

• L E T T E R CLXXXII.

From the King.

Undated*.

THAT you may not imagine no one labours in the Lord's vineyard, after the death of our patriarch, this letter is accompanied by a production of the brotherhood of the Baltic, who collect as many stones as they can to lapidate their enemy. The Commentary† I here send you is written according to the principles of Huet, Calmet, Labbadie, and numerous other lunatics, whose wild imaginations have led them to prove, from certain books, things that never were there.

The other work develops the origin of the ties of society, and of certain of the duties of those who live united by the social compact. No great effects have been produced; but, should the author convert one in a thousand, he may venture to applaud himself, and be persuaded that he has not wholly lost his time.

The bust of Voltaire which you mention gives

* This letter is misplaced in the French editions; and from the next letter we learn its date is October the 7th. T.

† See Vol. V. p. 177. T.

me a great inclination to purchase it, did not the expensive war which we have just concluded make our waters ebb for a time. This affair must be remitted to the coming year, when our feathers will begin once more to grow. You know the proverb—*Point d'argent point de Suisse* *—No money no bust.

From your letter I learn that you have been in the country, as a recreation after your labours. This was well done, for the mind must have relief. Were the bow kept continually bent, it would soon wholly lose its elasticity. You gave me at the same time a hope, in perspective, of once more seeing Protagoras in these abodes. I wish you had the arrow of Abaris, or the chariot of Elijah, that you might travel with greater speed and ease. Should Voltaire have bequeathed his Pegasus to you, that may be the best mode of conveyance. I shall then order our astronomers to plant their telescopes in a proper direction, that they may give me notice of your coming. I cannot but add that, should the journey be too long delayed, it might happen when you arrive I shall myself have taken my departure. I am old and feeble; my constitution is broken; Death has no need of

* No money no Swifts; or, according to the English proverb, money makes the mare to go. T.

his darts to vanquish me ; my existence is but a spider's thread, which may be broken without trouble. For this I care but little. Somewhat sooner somewhat later. What we are others shall be, *et circulus circulatorum*. Posterity shall go the road their predecessors have taught them, by travelling it first.

State politics appear to me to have some affinity with religion. One schism arises after another. The followers of Ali occasionally are more potent than the disciples of Omar. Truth shall finally prevail, and evident proofs of the true interests of states shall conquer temporary delusion. Truth is characterised by something so simple, and so palpable, that, provided there be no natural contortion or error of mind, it must conquer. No man can deny that two and two make four ; nor will any one think proper to affirm that the three angles of a triangle are not equal to two right angles. The same may be said of many things in politics, which may be proved with certitude approaching mathematical demonstration. That one idea should be more striking at one moment than at another depends on time and circumstance ; especially when the eyes of certain persons, who serve as pivots to the political machine of Europe, are not blinded by prejudice. And here have you a most excellent

lent algebraico-politico-olio, by which you will perceive I begin to dote. Come quickly, therefore, or you will not find me at home.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, November 19, 1779.

I HAVE for some weeks been in the most distressing anxiety, at not having received any letter from your majesty. Why should I not venture to avow this, since the origin of such sensations at least cannot displease, and since it is dictated by my tender veneration? From the baron von Goltz I heard that your majesty was in good health, and I was afflicted at your long silence. Not that I am ignorant that your majesty has much better employment than to answer the rhapsodies I write; but your bounty, sire, has been so great to me that, allow me the expression, I am a spoilt child; nor can I be quiet, unless I occasionally receive a few consolatory lines, signed Frederic.

At length I was agreeably relieved, by receiving, some few days since, a charming letter from

your majesty, dated October 7th. Its arrival was five weeks after the date, because the packet with which it was accompanied no doubt could not be expedited by the post. I am the most lively thanks in your debt, sire, for the letter and the packet, so valuable in every respect, as well for its contents as because of the revered and cherished hand from which it comes. I did not lose a moment, sire, to read and read again the two excellent works it contains. Nothing can be more pleasant, more philosophic, more humorous, than the theological commentary on Blue-beard. Had your majesty passed your whole life in reading Don Calmet, and the other absurd scholiasts, you could not with greater art, or more essentially to the cause of reason, have turned such follies to ridicule. I am sincerely afflicted that this truly philosophic pleasantry is not more generally dispersed over Paris, that our mystics and fanatics might be overwhelmed with all the ignominy of which they are worthy. I promise myself at least to communicate it to all our sages, and even to those who are not sage. Your majesty ought, from motives of christian and particularly of apostolic charity, to send a copy to the bishop of Puy, whom you have made to speak so well. The address of this learned and eloquent prelate is no longer at
Puy,

Puy, but at Vienne in Dauphiné, of which he has been made archbishop, as a recompense for his fine compositions in favour of * * *. The commentary on Blue-beard must gain him the archbishopric of Paris, should the see, by the grace of God, become vacant. But we shall probably long preserve Christopher de Beaumont, for the glory divine and the church's edification !

So great is the pleasure I have received from this humorous work that I should never conclude, had I not still to speak of a second work, which I at the same time received from your majesty ; I mean your excellent letters on the love of our country, which in their kind merit no less praise than the commentary, though praise of a very different species. It is a treatise of patriotic morals, abounding in feeling eloquence, and profound reasoning, such as Cicero might have written. Nothing more interesting, more affecting, or better founded, could have been said on the subject. The book deserves to be put into the hands of youth, as the basis of an excellent moral education ; nor can I too earnestly entreat your majesty to make it one of the books appropriated for the instruction of young students, in your kingdom, in every province, and for all ranks. Nothing can appear

pear to me more proper to form zealous and virtuous citizens. Such is *the catechism* they ought to be taught.

Still however I am afflicted, and hope your majesty will permit me to open my heart on the subject. I am sorry that, in a book in which the just and natural love of our country is recommended, you appear desirous to combat what you call the Encyclopedists. I do not recollect, sire, that, in any passage of this vast dictionary, any one has had the folly, and the audacity, to oppose the love of our country. I certainly should not have admitted any such article, during the time that I was at the head of the work. Some pretended philosopher, for many fools at present usurp the title, may have printed, in an unknown pamphlet, absurd follies against patriotism; but believe me, sire, all philosophers, truly worthy of the appellation, would disavow such pamphlet, were they acquainted with it; or would rather do themselves the justice to disdain answering an imputation so ill-founded.

I cannot too often repeat to your majesty that, not philosophers, but, priests are the real enemies of their country, of the laws, and of good order and legitimate authority. Were I thirty years younger, I should find no trouble to demonstrate

monstrate this; but I am at present sixty-two, and if I may be allowed so to do would wish to spend the few days I have to live in peace.

My great wish is that I might not end these sorrowful days, without once again laying the tender and respectful homage which, for so many reasons, I owe you, at your majesty's feet. Though my health daily becomes more feeble, though my mind is scarcely capable of any exertion, and though I sleep and digest ill enough, I yet cannot totally renounce the sweet hope of listening to your majesty : like the devout, who flatter themselves they shall one day enter Paradise, there to behold God face to face. May this God give or restore me a little strength, by which I will profit, with all the zeal of one of the blessed, to renew the most ardent sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and profound and tender veneration, with which I shall to my last sigh, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXIV.

From the King.

December 3, 1779.

I WAS rather uneasy concerning the fate of my letters, and the packet which accompanied them.

them. I suspected the post-offices of treachery. I carried suspicion so far as even to suppose neither my letter nor my books would be delivered, because assertions might there have been found shocking to pious ears, and smelling of heresy. Nay I dreaded lest my silly whims, announced to my lord the archbishop of Paris, should draw down excommunication major, on the poor heretic, the author of that pious work. At length your letter arrived, and my fears are flown.

Your judgment on these poor productions is too favourable. What good can spring from the brain of an ignorant old man, who all his life has been the sport of fortune, whom action robs of the time he might employ in meditation, who daily loses his senses and his memory, and who will soon depart to join the lord marshal, Algarotti, and Voltaire? Energy of mind appertains to that age when the man is in full force. He then may produce good works, provided he have the necessary knowledge, talents, and genius; but age destroys every thing; the soul declines with the body. The last loses its strength, and the first its vigour. My intention, while writing these rhapsodies, was good; but, for the execution, a more able hand, and a more academic style, were requisite.

You are astonished that the letters of Philopatro

tros speak of the Encyclopedists. I have read in their works that the love of our country is a prejudice which government has endeavoured to establish; and that, in an age enlightened like the present, we ought to rid ourselves of these ancient chimeras. This may be found in one of the works which appeared before, or soon after, the System of Nature. Such assertions ought to be refuted, for the good of society. However, to justify myself fully, I must add that here, in Germany, we place all the works which lunatics produce in France to the account of the Encyclopedists. I speak to the public, I must therefore employ the language of the public; for I hope your good opinion of me is sufficient to lead you to believe that I do not confound D'Alembert with Jean Jacques, Diderot, and those self-created philosophers who are the disgrace of letters.

I accept with pleasure the hope you give me that I shall once more see Anaxagoras, before I die; but I must inform you there is no time to lose. My memory fails, my hair grows grey, my ardour is extinct, and nothing will soon remain of the self-called philosopher of Sans Souci. Still you will not be received with less eagerness, charmed as I shall be to testify my esteem.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CLXXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, December 27, 1779.

I BEGIN this letter and the answer which I owe your majesty as I ought, by the object which interests me most, the ardent wishes I make for you, your fame, your happiness, your preservation and your health, so inestimable to your people, to Europe, the repose of which it ascertains, and, if I dare name myself, to me who for more than thirty years have been so respectfully, and so tenderly, attached to your majesty. You now conclude the fortieth year of the most glorious reign with which history is acquainted. May you reign forty more ! May you long bear the blessings with which Germany loads your majesty ; and hear the strong expressions of admiration with which you inspire all Europe.

I had previously been informed, by the public papers, of the fit of the gout which your majesty has sustained ; and I wish what I have farther been informed of, by baron Grimm, were known to all Europe and her kings ; which is that, not being able to write with your right hand,

hand, you were determined to write with your left, that state affairs might be dispatched. How respectable is activity like this, and how worthy to be admired, when, as in this instance, the good of the people is its sole object ! M. de la Haye de Launay, who is here, and who sometimes visits me, at that part of the day when I have a select society of the admirers of your majesty, has enchanted us by the recital he has made, of the acts of benevolence, justice, and if I dared I should say providence, which employ every day of your life.

Your majesty imagines the gout in your right hand is a divine punishment, for the very pleasant and very philosophic commentary on Bluebeard, which that hand had the impiety to write. I take the liberty to recommend the priests, the theologians, and all the follies they retail, to your majesty's left hand, when the right shall be unable to grasp the thunder. They deserve additional chastisement, from a philosophic king, by daily becoming worse. They at present refuse the French Academy the satisfaction of rendering funeral honours to the memory of the great Voltaire ; and government, which hates and despises them, appears, I know not why, to support this trait of fanaticism !

Fortunately the manes of this great man have
 2 been

been most worthily honoured, by the eloquent and affecting eulogium of your majesty, which is of more worth than any funeral service, even though performed by his holiness the pope himself. I again take the liberty to invite your majesty to purchase the marble bust of this uncommon man; nor can I forbear to say how much I was moved, by what you did me the honour to write on the subject, remitting the expence to another year. This proof of truly royal œconomy has enraptured all to whom it has been related. They join, with me, in wishes that other sovereigns might imitate that example, by imparting to their expences a degree of order, and attention, so necessary to the welfare of their subjects.

You have, in your excellent work on the love of our country, most eloquently and effectively refuted the abominable assertions, which you affirm you have read, in one of the vile books which appeared about the same time as the System of Nature. But believe me, sire, neither this system nor any of those vile books have been written by any true philosopher, or author worthy of the name. It is vexatious to those honest men, who have inserted their labours in the Encyclopedie, that all the crude nonsense which shall appear must be placed to
their

their account; and that the epithet of Encyclopedists should be given to the enemies of their country. Alas! fire, had I not loved mine, I should long since have been with your majesty. I love this country still, though I am there loaded with indignities, to which indeed I am little sensible, but which government, I know not for what sublime motive, not only permits but encourages and rewards.

This is the recompense bestowed on me, for the sacrifices I have made to my country, and for the labour of five and forty years, without having ever merited, either by my writings or my conduct, reproach for my behaviour as a citizen. The favours heaped on me, by your majesty, are high remuneration for this injustice. Why can I not yet repair to enjoy these same favours in your presence? Though I do not renounce the project, I dare not absolutely form it; so feeble, so variable, and so wavering is my health. I redouble my attention, and if possible will profit by the first moment of returning strength, again to lay those sentiments, with which my heart so long has been full, at your majesty's feet.

M. de Catt will be kind enough to give the memorial of the poor curate, who affirms he is persecuted by a fanatic bishop, and who im-

plores the bounty and protection of your majesty, for your inspection. I have promised the curate you will do him justice according to his merits, and I request you would be pleased to send me your answer, by M. de Catt.

I am this year, as I shall be every other, with the most tender veneration, and the most lively gratitude, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

AS, with me, the wishes of a philosopher are much preferable to the prayers of a monk, you have a right to expect my thanks for your good wishes on the new year. And, as I am as little * * * as yourself, I flatter myself that, if I wish Heaven should shed its benefits on you and on all the lovers of wisdom, you will not find any thing disagreeable in the wish. May you, then, during the coming year, live in peace, void of dispute, excommunication, and anathema; and may those dregs of the human race, whom we bishops name, become rational and tolerant! But, I am afraid, it will be as
difficult

difficult to render your priests humane as to teach speech to elephants.

Good God! How opprobrious is it, to the clergy of France, so obstinately to persist to injure the great man whom we have lost! I maintain these tonsured priests are ungrateful. Voltaire has often blunted the darts he has hurled, that the wound might not be too painful. Another, who should spare them less, might lay them in the dust, never more to rise. Philosophers have skirmished, here and there; they have made fallies, but the empirics of superstition have never had their ranks totally broken; they have never been beaten and entirely dispersed. Arms are ready prepared for the combat, and were I young I would attack the Lernian hydra, like Hercules; the papal beast, whose concentrated vices are productive of new heads. Truth here should overthrow their absurd fables; there virtue should bring to light that string of crimes with which the ecclesiastic hierarchy is stained. But these are weapons which should be wielded by vigorous arms, and mine are gouty: At my birth, I found the world the slave of superstition, and dying so shall leave it. The reason of this is that the people swallow twelve articles of faith like so many pills, while they are more jealous of what concerns their

liberty and property. They do not perceive that, thus chained by dogmas, their slavery is the inevitable consequence. With respect to those who harass you, I advise you to oppose to them the armour of Fontenelle, who of all the learned was the sage who most avoided to engage in wrangles with the vipers of the sacred valley. For my own part, I sometimes combat with the Austrians, and sometimes with the gout; and, when I am assailed by the latter, since nature has given me two hands, I think that, if disease deprives me of the use of one, the other ought to perform its functions. I have at present driven off the foe, and have vanquished Mr. Gout, who loves good cheer, by prescribing him the regimen of the hermits of the Thebais. I immediately inquired into the affair of your priest of Neufchatel, to whom justice shall be done.

I wish your health may be perfectly re-established, or I shall say, with madame Deshoulières—

Oui, c'est désespérer que d'espérer toujours.*

Since my return to Berlin, I have wished to rub off the rust of my campaign, and lay on an academic varnish. I have conversed with M.

* Protracted hope is equal to despair.

Formey,

Formey, who most learnedly, and most profoundly, to my great edification, discoursed on subjects most grave, of the truth of which our perpetual secretary wished to convince me. Another day, the Homeric Bitaubé assured me that the author of the Iliad, and the Odyssey, was the sole poet which a long succession of ages had produced.

I then corroborated my faith by the sage, political, and philosophical reflections of M. Wegguelin; and, as earthly cares had for a time made me forget heaven, M. Bernouilli was kind enough to communicate to me the itinerary of the stars. From him I learned that it was suspected the court of Venus was more numerous than it had been supposed to be; and that indications had been discovered of one of her satellites. I, who travel fast in case of need, instantly baptised this satellite Cupid, and recommended myself to the favour of the goddess, the new satellite, and the three Graces.

M. Bernouilli pretends, by the aid of this satellite, who apparently is a spy, the exact size of the Cytherean goddess may be calculated, as certainly as if he had measured her with her own cestus. I earnestly entreated him to keep this a secret, that he might not bring the works of

Phidias and Praxiteles, who have sculptured the goddess in so superior a style, into discredit.

I then saw M. de la Grange, who endeavoured to temper the sublimity of his language in an inverse ratio to the square of my ignorance. He led me, from abstraction to abstraction, into labyrinths so dark that my poor understanding would have lost its road, had not our good Swift, M. Merian, conducted me from these high infinitesimal regions, and safely landed me on the abject and crude globe on which I vegetate.

M. Achard finally taught me what fixed air is, and without difficulty brought me to own that matter has an infinite number of properties, which have hitherto escaped our knowledge; and that, according to the plan of Bacon, it will only be by reiterated experiments that we shall in time somewhat extend our narrow sphere of science. Unfortunately, the first principles of things will ever remain beyond our feeble penetration.

Such is an abridgment of the short academical course to which I submitted, during my illness, which is not worthy the trouble of communicating to the sublime Anaxagoras. Had I had any thing more interesting to tell him, I certainly should not have told him this.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T.

LETTER CLXXXVII,

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, February 29, 1780.

THE two letters I have received from your majesty, within a few days of each other, and which have been rather long on the road, for they did not arrive till three weeks after date, came very a-propos to calm my apprehensions, which took birth from the hazarded and indiscreet reports relative to your majesty's health. Baron von Goltz had indeed much quieted my fears, by certifying what little foundation there was for such rumours. But, sire, the greater our affection the greater our fears; and I stood in need of an assurance under your majesty's own hand of their falsity. This you have given me, not only by deigning to enter with me, at some length, into the subject by which I am so much interested, but, by writing two letters, the one of which, from its abundant humour, and the other because of its philosophy, at once feeling and forcible, cannot be the productions of a sick man. Long may you preserve health so precious to multitudes, and so formidable to the enemies of peace! Men like you ought

to be immortal ; to lose such is one of the misfortunes of humanity.

I have only within these few days received the six copies your majesty has been pleased to send me, of the very pleasant, very philosophic Commentary on Blue-beard ; and these I gave to men worthy to receive the present, and capable of knowing its value ; men who, like me, are admirers of your majesty, and who, without any knowledge of you, except from the voice of fame, are almost equally devoted to you.

I have once more very lately read this excellent commentary, and am astonished that so happy and so natural an idea, to mock what the foolish multitude worship, should never before have been conceived. It is evident that all the commentaries on Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Baruch, are not more intelligible than yours, and are much less pleasant. Oh that the press had been somewhat more free in France ! I would then have extracted an excellent article from this commentary, for one of our journals. Though to own the truth, first, there are few of them worthy of such a morsel, loaded as they are with nonsense. Though I cannot make the Gauls acquainted with the work, I will yet introduce it to the knowledge of those who are worthy to read it, and the number of whom daily increases, thanks

to the example which your majesty has afforded Europe, of the profound contempt in which you hold all human superstitions.

Well may your majesty's indignation rise at the treatment which such superstitions have excited, in France, against the memory of Voltaire. May I venture, sire, to propose a trifling reparation, which would somewhat mortify the fanatics? I mean that of performing a mass for him in your catholic church of Berlin, which favour the Gauls have refused. They have lately insulted his memory, in a most indecent manner, in the pleadings of one of the counsellors of the parliament of Paris, before the parliament of Rouen. Our parliaments, sire, are more stupid, and more ignorant, than the Sorbonne; and that is indubitably a bold assertion.

M. de Launay *, who intends incessantly to depart and render an account to your majesty of all the good and evil he has observed, in this country, has several times visited those societies which are three times a week held at my house, consisting of men of letters, and men of the world, who are the most select and best informed. He can assure your majesty that there

* This, no doubt, is the De Launay so often mentioned in the Secret History of the Court of Berlin, one of the most singular books the age has produced. T.

was not one of these conversations in which each person did not express, with equal energy and interest, those sentiments of admiration, and respect, with which each is penetrated for you.

You have lately, sire, increased those just sentiments, by the excellent ordinances you have last published, for the administration of justice, and which the wisest of legislators would have envied your majesty. How, sire, would you punish numbers of our French judges, convicted not merely of having vexed an unfortunate peasant, like those of Custring, but of having condemned the innocent to death! Hence it happens that some of our parliamentary cabals think the punishment your majesty has inflicted very *rigorous*; for they dare not employ any other word. Their censure is increase of praise.

A man of letters and much wit, M. de Ruilliere, who three or four years ago had the honour to pay his court to your majesty, and who is the author of a very curious and well-written history of the tragic catastrophe of Peter III. has been several years at work on the History of the Revolution of Poland, and the partition of that country. As he particularly wishes to speak the truth, consequently, to express the just sentiments of admiration with which he is penetrated for your majesty, he has entreated me to ask
whether

whether there would be no indiscretion in testifying to your majesty a desire that you would be pleased to procure him memorials, on that important event ; of the worth of which he would be sensible, of which he would make a most interesting use, and would beside submit to such conditions as your majesty should think proper to exact. He waits with the greatest impatience the answer your majesty shall be pleased to send.

I am, with the most profound and tender sentiments of respect, admiration, and gratitude, with which I have been for near forty years devoted to you, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

From the King.

Undated *.

I KNOW not by what accident an account of the sentences passed in this country is become current, among foreign nations. Laws

* This letter in the French editions is the last of the correspondence ; but its contents denote its true place, except that it is difficult to say whether this or the next should be read first. It refers to the memorable affair of the miller Arnold, which M. D'Alembert had alluded to in the preceding letter. T.

were

were made for the protection of the weak against the oppression of the powerful, and would be every where observed, were those who are their organs and executors attentively watched. You possess admirable discourses, delivered by your presidents at the beginning of your parliamentary sessions, which shew that those able judges have endeavoured to warn counsellors, against all the foibles and vices of humanity, by which they might be induced to prevaricate. But to warn is not always sufficient; examples of severity are sometimes necessary, that a body of counsellors so numerous may be restrained within the limits of duty. Kings were originally the judges of the state. Multiplicity of business has obliged them to commit that branch of government to persons in whom they confide. Still they ought not to neglect this part of administration, so far as to tolerate those who abuse their name, and authority, for the commission of injustice.

This is the reason that has obliged me to watch over those whose duty it is to do justice, because an iniquitous judge is worse than a highwayman. To secure citizens in their possessions, and to render them as happy as human nature will admit them to be, are the duties of those who are placed at the head of societies; and these

these duties I endeavour to execute, to the best of my abilities. Or to what purpose should I have read Plato, Aristotle, and the laws of Lycurgus and Solon? True philosophy is to practise the good lessons of philosophers. Such you will bequeath to future ages; and your lessons, productive in the mind of posterity, will in their turn form men, whose endeavours will be to become the benefactors of the human race.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXIX.

From the King.

March 26, 1780*.

BAD roads must have retarded the arrival of the post, for there are neither pirates nor privateers on terra firma, between Berlin and Paris; so that the interruption of our correspondence can only be attributed to the sudden thaws, and inundations, which have spoiled the roads. Your letter has in like manner been three weeks on the road, but was not the less welcome. Beauties gain by making the company wait.

* Undated in the Berlin edition. T, With

With respect to my age, you must naturally presume that, being sixty-eight, I must begin to be infirm. Sometimes the gout, at others the sciatica, or some temporary fever, amuse themselves at the expence of my existence; and prepare me to quit the worn-out case of my soul. Nature seems willing to disgust us with life, by loading us with infirmities toward its close. At such a period we may say, with the emperor Marcus Aurelius—"We resign ourselves, without a murmur, to all which the eternal laws of nature have condemned us to suffer."

But let us quit this grave subject, for one more amusing. Blue-beard may have afforded you some entertainment; the idea is not amiss. Had Voltaire treated the subject, his mode of embellishing it would have been different. I have a doctor of the Sorbonne here, at present, who gives me lessons on theological absurdities, by which I make a rapid progress. From him I learn what external and internal intention are. Curious things these! Of which, as great a philosopher as you are, you are ignorant! He has taught me a formula of nonsense inconceivable; by which I intend to profit, in the first theological work I shall write. Nay, I flatter myself, I shall give check-mate to Tamponet, Ribailier, and even to Larchet, and to the greatest among the

the

the luminaries of the Sorbonne. I am farther provided with some fifty of the most subtile distinctions; such as are the most artful and proper to conceal, by their obscurity, the most evident truths.

Proud of such knowledge, and inflated with noble daring, I aspire no less than to become a doctor of the Sorbonne myself; and having already afforded proofs of my scientific learning, in the work on Blue-beard, I mean to attain the titled dignity of commentator to the sacred faculty! Charles V. retired to the convent of St. Just, and the Sorbonne shall become the asylum of my old age! It shall be to me instead of purgatory; and, when I quit Ribaillet and Patouillet, it shall be for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Accustomed to yawn in the company of doctors, I shall easily accommodate myself to the yawning of the patriarchs; and my voice will be less discordant while eternally singing one eternal hallelujah. Full of that flaming zeal by which I am animated, and eaten up, full of the desire of making proselytes, I make you the proposal of entering the Sorbonne with me. I will comment on their blunders, and you shall calculate their follies, if you can but find figures enough.

We must act cunningly, to steal a mass from our priests, and a service for Voltaire. The Ger-

mans

mans have only heard his name as that of an atheist, a Vanini, a Spinoza, and we must negotiate that the catastrophe of this mass may be fortunate. The doctors of the Sorbonne, be mass said or be it not said, will maintain he is damned, and will devote him to the empire of the prince of darkness. Their wounds, alas ! still bleed ; and the spur of pleasantry has been struck so deep that the extreme pain they felt is not, nor will be soon, appeased ; for whoever attacks the church attacks God ; and whoever attacks God ought to be extirpated from the face of the earth. This is clear ; a formal syllogism ; consequently, Voltaire at present is consigned to the infernal caldron.

But quit we hell, and let us return to Paris, where you tell me that M. de Ruillieres, whom I know, proposes to write a history of the late troubles in Poland. It seems to me the epocha is too recent for a historian to be able to explain himself, on that event, with all proper freedom. The actors still exist, and it will be difficult, while speaking the truth, not to offend any one. The substance of what can be said on the subject is reduced to this. The discontented Poles confederated, to dethrone the king, whom the empress of Russia had set over them ; some propositions, relative to toleration in religion, offended them

them so far that they wished to assassinate their monarch; the court of Vienna, by seizing on the principality of Zips, occasioned the partition of the kingdom, for the empress of Russia thought she had a right to revenge herself, for the intractable obstinacy of the republic. To enter further into the subject would be to descend to personal minutiae, which can only safely appear before the eyes of posterity.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CXC.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, April 14, 1780.

I CANNOT too often repeat, nor with too much pleasure, that the letters of your majesty are the best answers to those who wish to believe the rumours that are circulated concerning your health. That which you did me the honour to write, on the 26th of March, is of the most true and poignant kind of humour. Your conversations with the doctor of the Sorbonne, under whom you have studied theology, will deserve to be read to the sacred faculty. I am only astonished that your majesty, having so

many great and excellent things on your mind, can still find a place in which to deposit the absurdities of the Sorbonne. I hope they will be productive of some new commentary on *Cinderella*, or on *the Sleeping Beauty of the Wood*.

Till this shall appear, approved by the holy Inquisition, as it cannot fail to be, I cannot too earnestly conjure your majesty to render those funeral honours, to the manes of Voltaire, in the catholic church of Berlin, which the Gauls pertinaciously refuse. I know that the sacerdotal gang of all countries, and all religions, regard him as an atheist; but I likewise know that, in all countries, the sacerdotal gang is obliged to obey princes like you; especially when the demand is a just one, and conformable to every thing which the doctors call the canons of the church.

For the ease of their consciences, it will be sufficient for your majesty to lay the papers sent with this letter before them, which are signed and certified by two of the nephews of M. de Voltaire, one of whom is the abbé Mignot, counsellor of the grand council, and the other M. d'Hornoy, counsellor of the parliament; both of them respectable men in their companies.

In the first piece, No. 1, your catholic priests
will

will see the narrative of every thing which happened during the illness of this great man; and there find proofs of the injustice that has been committed, according to established rules, by refusing him burial, at Paris, and a funeral service. I dare flatter myself that, should not your majesty have time to examine these details, would you please to order any reasonable man to read and inspect the papers, he will allow, however good a catholic he may be, that the priests of the Roman church cannot legally refuse a service. Great will be the joy your majesty will inspire those with who are the admirers of that uncommon man, by this new mark of honour rendered to his memory! I, in particular, shall be penetrated with the most lively gratitude.

It is my duty to add that the nephews of M. de Voltaire, from whom I obtained these different pieces, earnestly request your majesty will not suffer them to be published. They only wish to enable your majesty to prove, to the German catholics, that they may, without wounding their conscience, pray to God for him who wrote so many fine works, and performed so many fine actions.

I and they wait with impatience to learn what your majesty shall please to command, on the

subject. I also wait your orders relative to the marble bust, the likeness of which is excellent, and which you seemed willing to purchase this year. The workmanship is masterly, the price only three thousand French livres (one hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling) and the sculptor engages it shall be safely delivered at Potsdam.

M. de Ruillieres, to whom I read the passage from your majesty's letter in which he is mentioned, is penetrated with gratitude, and will employ these few lines in his history of the revolution of Poland, which to him appear very precious, and very essential.

A Seneschal of Corlaix, in Lower Brittany, has addressed some verses to me for your majesty, which he desires me to send you. The name of the poet is Georgelin; he is a person of the long robe, and praises your majesty for having taught magistrates their duty; his homage therefore is not of a suspicious nature.

*Frédéric réunit tous les droits à la gloire ;
Il offre, en chaque genre, un modèle nouveau.
Comme il sait, en son camp, enchaîner la victoire,
Il fait chérir la paix, même jusqu'au barreau*.*

* Frederic possesses every claim to glory, of each species of which he has formed new models. In his camp he leads Victory in chains, and obliges even lawyers to live in peace.

I will

I will not speak to your majesty of the state of my fragile machine. M. de Catt, should you permit him, may weary you with such details. I console myself by knowing that your majesty is in good health, and by flattering myself I shall be your harbinger to the banks of Acheron, where my arrival will long precede yours. May your departure suffer all possible delay! And may that destiny which presides over the lives of great men long multiply your days!

I am, with the most profound and most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CXCI.

From the King.

Undated,

AS I have only the gout in my feet, and not in my head, it does not prevent me, my dear D'Alembert, from preserving some remains of my former cheerfulness. I am more inclined to follow the example of Democritus than eternally to weep with Heraclitus, for misfortunes which we cannot redress. Thus the fools of the Sorbonne amuse me as much as the Harlequin Savage of the Italian comedy. To learn from the

wife, and to divert themselves with fools, are acts worthy of men of sense. Thus therefore I act; and I can assure you that those of your monks who plume themselves most, on their obscure science, are the persons who most promote my recreation.

However great the efforts of your theologic race, to decry Voltaire after his death, I discover nothing in them but the impotent attempts of envious rage, which covers its authors with opprobrium. Provided with the justificatory pieces which you have sent me, I have begun the famous negotiation for a mass for Voltaire, at Berlin; and, though I can form no idea of the thing called an immortal soul, mass shall be said for his. The actors of this farce, with us, are better acquainted with money than good books. I therefore hope that the *jura stolæ* will be too strong for scruples of conscience.

A French mathematician has emphatically written to me that he has discovered the squaring of the circle, and that he has incited the jealousy of all Europe! As far as I understand such matters, the thing is impossible, because of the inequality of the sections of the circle; and, should his calculation even be a nearer approach than those of his predecessors, the discovery would still be useless. These high sciences are
only

only so far useful to society as they may be applied to astronomy, mechanics, and hydrostatics; in other respects, they are but luxury of mind.

We have here a mechanic of real genius. His name is Hermite, a man fruitful in ingenious and useful inventions. He wants nothing but celebrity. His simplicity and modesty enhance his merit as much as does his knowledge. Could all the talents which nature delights in distributing, at a venture, be discovered in any country, and each talent in its kind employed, that country would soon become the first in Europe. But how much sagacity, what infinite assiduity, and patience, are requisite for such discoveries! Fate has reserved the guidance of man to herself; and, after mature examination, we shall find we have less part in the affair than our pride attributes to itself.

I now come to the bust of Voltaire, which I beg you will not send before the month of September, when all expences shall be punctually paid. The letter you have written to Cart has given me much pleasure. I refer you to the answer which you will receive from him. We have no time to lose at our age. We must be quick in meeting in this world, or appoint a meeting in the valley of Jehosaphat; and you know what happens there.

In less than a month, death has carried off several distinguished and well known persons, in our parts. The princess of Prussia, her brother the duke of Wirtemberg, the electress dowager of Saxony, the prince and princess Hatzfeld, and the prince of Mansfeld with his son. A destructive and bloody battle would not have swept away more at a time. If therefore an old man of seventy be in haste to see you, do not wonder; it is that he may, before he die, assure you of the esteem he has for you, and for your genius.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXCH.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, June 8, 1780.

I HAVE written the unfortunate and wearisome narrative of my physical and mental situation to M. de Catt, of which he will render an account to your majesty. But he cannot express my profound grief, at being unable to come and lay all the sentiments at your majesty's feet which I owe you, and have vowed to preserve

preserve till death. At least he cannot express them as they are felt by me. Though my pain of body and mind is not so great as that which your majesty has so often felt, and which you have resisted with such heroic fortitude and patience, I still have need, feeble and frail as is my machine, of a part of this fortitude, overwhelmed as I am with affliction, at being unable to undertake a journey which I am more than ever desirous to undertake, and which is more than ever necessary to my depressed and withered faculties. With sorrow I resign myself to my fate, and add this new chagrin to the list of those which I have before so often experienced in this best of possible worlds. Why am I deprived, by a painful and dangerous indisposition, of the sweet consolation of bringing to your majesty, not only my tender veneration, my profound gratitude, and my more than ever ardent admiration, but, the attachment and respect of all France, of which I wish you could be a witness?

These sentiments will still increase, should it be known here that your majesty has paid all funeral honours to the great man to whom they have, so unworthily, been refused, by our priests. It is exceedingly strange that our government should suffer an act so infamous, or should permit

mit those fanatics to blast, as much as is in them, the laurels of men who have rendered the nation most illustrious! From the hope which your majesty has been pleased to inspire, I flatter myself that, on the 30th of May last, the anniversary of the death of this great man who has now been two years departed, a solemn service was celebrated, in a manner worthy of the hero and the philosopher who has issued his orders, and paid the expences!

We have at present here an assembly of the clergy, from whom M. Necker, our Sully and Colbert, is preparing to demand much money, which they must be obliged to grant. They will be highly irritated by the service for Voltaire; and I flatter myself it is the intention of your majesty that so they should be. I will not spare them any of the circumstances which may humble their pride and fanaticism.

We are here in most impatient expectation of the success of this third campaign; especially in America. The insolence and piracy of the English have offended every nation in Europe. The declaration lately made by the empress of Russia has been satisfactory to all Frenchmen; and all Frenchmen are persuaded your majesty has been very active, in this noble and firm step taken by Russia. It is with pleasure seen that these

these insolent English, who respect nothing, still however respect your majesty's flag. But no one is surprised that they should distinguish and fear your majesty, who, during a reign of forty years, have done every thing that was requisite to make yourself respected, both by friends and enemies. All France with pleasure beholds the former system of alliance and union acquiring force. Our friendship increases with our most natural ally, who is the most potent, the most respectable ally we possess. With this confidence, we are little alarmed by the interview which the emperor and the empress of Russia are to have, at Mohilow. We flatter ourselves it will not disturb the peace of Europe, which is in such great need of repose; and Europe will be indebted to your majesty for this new benefit.

I hope your majesty will have the bust of Voltaire toward the end of September, or the beginning of October. It would have been begun, but for the difficulty which has arisen, with the sculptor and with me likewise, relative to the costume of the head. I will not weary your majesty with these trifles; M. de Catt will inform you of them, and will remit me your commands. As soon as they arrive, the statuary will work unceasingly. I dare answer your majesty will
be

be exceedingly well satisfied, both with the workmanship and the likeness.

A new edition is preparing of the works of a man so illustrious, and so inestimable to literature and reason. It will be elegantly printed, and prodigiously enriched; though, as your majesty may well imagine, it will be printed in a foreign country; thanks to the clamours of the French fanatics, the perpetual scourge of all knowledge, and all worth. It is farther asserted, the edition will be carefully edited, by men of merit, to whom the memory and the works of Voltaire are dear. It ought, sire, to be printed at Berlin, under the auspices of your majesty; that, in the same frontispiece, might be read the names of the two most illustrious men of the age.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXIII.

From the King.

June 22, 1780.

WE imagined, one minute after another, we should have seen you arrive when I received your letter. Though it gave me pleasure,

sure, it was a pleasure unequal to the satisfaction of seeing you in person. The reasons however which have prevented you from undertaking the journey are so unanswerable that I am obliged to submit. By what fatality should the gravel happen to burrow in the reins of a philosopher? Could it not take up its lodging in the body of a Sorbonnist, a fanatic, a capuchin, or other animals of the like species? This disease is one of the most painful with which poor human nature is afflicted. I advise you to take the medicine of Mrs. Stevens. Many people here have found ease from it; and, though the English are at war with the French, I imagine a Frenchman may calculate with Newton, think with Locke, and take physic with Mrs. Stevens.

My sentence then is pronounced, my dear Anaxagoras, and I shall never meet you more, till we come to the valley of Jehosaphat, if such valley there be.

I am your pledge that Voltaire is no longer in purgatory; public service having been celebrated, for the repose of his soul, in the catholic church of Berlin. The French Virgil ought at present to be shining in resplendent glory; nor can theologic hatred prevent him walking in the Elysian fields, in the company of Socrates, Homer,

mer, Virgil, and Lucretius; leaning on the shoulders of Bayle and Montagne, and casting a distant glance toward the popes, cardinals, persecutors and fanatics, who are suffering, in Tartarus, the pains of Ixion, Tantalus, Prometheus, and all the other famous culprits of antiquity. Had the keys of purgatory been committed solely to your French bishops, all hope for poor Voltaire would have been over; but, by the aid of the passport which has been furnished (the masses said for the repose of his soul) the locks fly open and he has escaped, in despite of Beaumont, Pompignan, and their whole crew.

You give me pleasure, by informing me of the new edition which is preparing of the works of Voltaire. It were to be wished that the editors would omit his too frequent fallies on people like Nonotte, Patouillet, and other insects of literature, whose names do not merit a place in these inimitable productions, which, worthy of posterity, will endure as long and perhaps longer than the French monarchy. The writings of Virgil, Horace, and Cicero, have survived the destruction of the capitol, and of Rome itself; they subsist and have been translated into all languages, and will subsist, while

there shall be men in the world who think, read, and delight in knowledge.

Such will be the fate of the works of Voltaire. To him I make my morning orisons ; to him I say—Divine Voltaire, *Ora pro nobis!* Let but Calliope, Melpomene, or Urania, enlighten and inspire me, and my faint will equal your Saint Denis. My faint, instead of troubling the world, aided oppressed innocence, as much as he had the power ; and, more than once, put fanaticism to shame, and made judges blush at their iniquity ! He would have reformed the world, could it have been reformed.

This short specimen, my dear Anaxagoras, of philosophic freedom will enable you to judge of the little progress I make in my Sorbonne studies, under the dictates of my doctor, whose time and trouble are lost on me. Often does he groan in heart that he is unable to bring back the lost sheep to the fold of the church, there to shear and slay him ; but this sheep, like the English nation, has revolted and takes arms * against the imposed yoke of tyranny.

At present, the French, Spanish, and English are acting on the bloody and tragical stage of Mars. I sit in the pit, and behold them parry,

* *Se gendarme*—Considering he was a sheep, he was the most valorous of his race. T.

and

and tilt at each other. The drama they act appears to me written in the taste of Crebillon. The plot is so complicated that no man can divine the denouement. Wind is the main incident, in all tragedies the scene of which is the sea; and I fear lest, in some of his freaks, Æolus should injure the success of your good countrymen.

Had not the empress of Russia long since signalized her reign, by her glorious exploits, her maritime code would have been sufficient to render it immortal. She avenges Neptune, by restoring him his trident, which had been wrested from him by usurpation. She, like Louis XIV, might hang up a picture in her palace, representing the legislatrix of the ocean dragging pirates, whom she has had the wisdom to enchain, after her triumphal car.

But all I have written, my dear D'Alembert, is unequal to the medicine of Mrs. Stevens. Consult your physicians, and with their approbation take it. My prayers are that your gravel may dissolve. May you enjoy the remainder of life in ease and peace!

On which I pray, &c.

P. S. I forgot to answer you relative to the bust of Voltaire. Let us not insult his country,
by

by a dress in which he would not be known. Voltaire thought in Greek, but he wrote in French. We should not disfigure our contemporaries, by bestowing on them the habit of a nation at present sunk, and degraded, under the tyranny of their Turkish conquerors.

L E T T E R CXCIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, July 24, 1780.

GREAT as was my grief, that I could not come and lay all the sentiments with which my heart is penetrated at your majesty's feet, the letter you have been pleased to honour me with has, if possible, augmented the deep affliction I felt. The kind enquiries of your majesty, concerning my state of health, excite in me the most lively gratitude. You propose an English remedy, which I should willingly take, although we are at war with that nation, did I suppose it proper for me. But, beside that it is said to be offensive to the stomach, and that in my crazy machine the stomach is little better than the vesica, it seems to be well determined, after consultations having been held, that my disease is not

the stone; that it is a very different kind of *calculus*, such as depends upon the heat of my blood, and especially on that of the season, for the heat of blood diminishes as the weather becomes colder, and during winter almost disappears, but increases as the weather becomes warmer, and especially when my loins are heated. The true remedies for this disease are bathing, a cooling regimen, rest, and the precaution of not riding too far, nor too long in a carriage.

To this, with great regret, am I obliged to add the almost entire privation of labour, for which I am the more afflicted because, having no intimate friendship, no social interest, since the loss I four years ago suffered, labour and study were become almost my only resource. Thus, to my misfortune, I begin to be sensible of languor which, till now, was unknown to me; and this added to several subjects of dissatisfaction, which I feel in my unfortunate country, make me more than ever desirous of that change of place and objects of which, thanks to my disease, I am deprived. If I ever wished to pass some moments with your majesty, I certainly should wish it now, but for the afflicting reasons by which I am prevented. And, as neither motives of affection nor pleasure detain me here, your majesty may be well assured I should commit no violence

violence on myself, by a deprivation of some months of the muddy waters of the Seine, our dull walks, and our no less dull theatres. Since however it is the will of Esculapius, and fate, that so it should be, I must submit to my mournful doom. Afflicted as is my tender veneration for your majesty, my self-love perhaps finds some consolation, from the fear that I should appear to your majesty much inferior to what I was, when you saw me seventeen years ago. Though, to say the truth, I am fallen from no stupendous height; but I feel that fallen I have, and that I am on the point of being quite laid low.

I weary your majesty by this detail, and shall be better pleased to speak of the pleasure the funeral service performed for Voltaire has given me. All people who love and revere his memory, that is to say all Paris, except perhaps the assembly of the clergy, have been delighted by the account they have heard of this pious and august ceremony. We are well assured, at present, that Voltaire has at least one foot in Paradise. Nothing more is wanting, to the honours of every kind which your majesty has rendered him, except to erect a monument to his memory, in the church of Berlin, where he should be represented prostrate before the Eternal Father, and

treading Fanaticism in the dust. The epigram would be excellent, and the statuary Tassart might execute the idea, under the direction and according to the plan of your majesty.

The artist is at present at work on the bust of this great man, in the French costume, according to your majesty's desire; and I hope it will be ready in two months, at the latest.

I have added a short poem, which a Flemish poet, little known, but a zealous admirer of that illustrious writer, has entreated me to lay before your majesty; a homage which he thought himself indebted to your majesty, for your regret at the loss of a great man whom, while living, you honoured with your bounty, and when dead with your eulogium.

M. de Catt will remit to your majesty a new memorial, and authentic certificates, in favour of the poor curate of Neufchâtel, who is persecuted by his fanatic bishop. Your majesty will be pleased to make yourself master of the circumstances, and to obtain justice for this poor devil of a priest, who has long petitioned and requested it at your hands.

May the destiny which embitters my days prolong those of your majesty at my expence, and afford you many years of health, repose, and glory! Alas! poor France will soon have
need

need of the second, when this wretched and foolish war shall be concluded, which event does not seem as if it would happen soon.

I am, with the most lively gratitude, and the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CXC.*

From the King.

Undated.

THERE is a melancholy gloom predominant in your letter, which inspires pain. It seems you have equal reason to complain of your constitution and of fortune. We are old men, who are almost at the end of our journey; we ought therefore to endeavour to be cheerful, during the remainder of the road. Were we immortal, we might be indulged in sorrow for afflictions; but life is too short for us rationally to allow ourselves to fix too high a value on things which soon must eternally vanish. You tell me, my dear Anaxagoras, that you have lost the energy you possessed in the year 1763. I have done the same. Age is doomed to decay. I forget names; the vigour of my mind is enfeebled; my legs are disordered; my sight is

* This letter is number CLXXIII. in the Basil edition. T.

bad; and vexations assault me as they do others, Yet does not this string of infirmities and disagreeable things prevent me from being cheerful. I shall smile when the earth is thrown upon my coffin. Endeavour therefore to cast off whatever may trouble your peace of mind. Recollect that life is but a dream, and that this dream ends with existence.

I perceive, with grief, I must renounce the pleasure of once more seeing you; and our conversation must be confined to committing our thoughts to paper. This however will be better than nothing; you will paint your ideas in black and white, and I shall profit by your thoughts.

I now come to the apotheosis of Voltaire, whom a priest has relieved from purgatory, without knowing what he did. The catholic church, at Berlin, is but little suitable to the cenotaph which you propose should be erected to his memory. This church is built after the model of the Pantheon at Rome; nor can such a mausoleum be placed in it without disfiguring the building. But, in revenge, Voltaire will have his bust placed in the academy, where he will be more at his ease than in company with your god-makers, and your theophagi*, who

* God-eaters. T.

would take offence at the sight; especially should the statue, by some miracle, be animated, and suffer an epigram to escape.

There are fine lines in the ode you have sent. The stanzas are some of them highly harmonious, but others of them are confused in their meaning, which defect the author may easily remove.

I have seen one M. Delisle, on his passage to Russia with the prince de Ligne, who spoke to me very much concerning Voltaire, and pretends he was present with him *in articulo mortis*. I wish he could have raised him from the dead. I believe I have said, and I fear with reason, the grave of Voltaire will be the grave of the fine arts. He has closed the dignified age of Louis XIV. and we now enter the age of Seneca, Pliny, and Quintilian. We quit the world with less regret during a season of dearth than in times of abundance; and this ought to render our last moments less disagreeable, because we are no longer attached to that which we must leave. Follow my advice, my dear Anaxagoras; bind your temples with garlands of roses; make merry, and resign yourself into the arms of destiny. May the resignation be fortunate, and may good health be yours!

On which I pray, &c.

Q 4

L E T.

L E T T E R CXCVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, September 15, 1780.

THE interest which your majesty kindly takes in my melancholy situation, bodily and mental, penetrates to the very bottom of my heart. Your bounty, the effects of which I so long have felt, is expressed with so much sensibility, in the last letter you have done me the honour to write, that I have but one regret and one fear, at present; which is that I have intruded too long, with my sufferings, on the great and important affairs by which you are occupied. One thing only can excuse my indiscretion, which is that the kindness of your majesty is at present my only consolation, my sole resource.

You kindly propose I should follow your example; you exhort me to imitate your cheerfulness and philosophy; which you possess in despite of age, that enfeebles your organs, and the cares and vexations that surround a throne. I know, sire, no class of men is exempt from suffering; but I likewise know that there are privileged beings, such as your majesty, to whom nature and destiny grant alleviating pleasures,

fures, such as are denied to other men. I, fire, am no better than a poor mathematician and man of letters; with some good, some indifferent qualities; at once suffering in reins and stomach, and under the decay of corporal and intellectual faculties; add to which the impossibility of charming away my cares by labour. I have not, for my consolation, the advantage to be either the greatest captain, the greatest king, the greatest and truest philosopher of the age, the protector of Germany, the reformer of the laws, or, in fine, the example of sovereigns and men of letters. With such comforts life may be supported; though, to a being like me, it is sometimes painful, sometimes insipid, but never the source of pleasure.

I perceive again too late that I have spoken of little but myself, of whom I spoke too much in my last letter. I humbly ask pardon of your majesty, and pass to an object more interesting to both you and me, to that great man whose memory your majesty has so eloquently and worthily honoured.

You think, sire, that the form of the church of Berlin is but little adapted to the monument which I have had the honour to propose. Permit me to observe to you that the church is said to be built after the model of the Pantheon at Rome;

Rome; otherwise called, by a happy change of name, Our Lady of the Rotunda. Now Raphael is interred in that church, and a monument is erected to him, the form and dimensions of which your majesty might easily procure. You might therefore erect a similar one at Berlin, to the Raphael of French literature; and this would, it appears to me, be an additional beauty to the church; and to your majesty, as the protector of genius even after death, a new monument of grandeur and glory.

While in expectation of a monument so precious to letters and philosophy, of which I still venture not to despair, the artist is very seriously, and without delay, at work on the marble bust, agreeable to your majesty's orders in the French costume, the resemblance of which is perfect. I know not whether your majesty design this bust for your cabinet, or for the academy. If you wish to have a second, let me entreat you to send me your commands. You may perhaps be satisfied with the original for your cabinet, which seemed to me to be your first intention, and may afterward cause your sculptor, Tassart, to make an exact copy of this bust for the academy at Berlin. Be it as it may, as soon as the work shall be finished, which I imagine will be in a short time, I will send advice

vice

vice of it to your majesty, and take the most certain and expeditious means of conveying it to you with safety.

My health is for the moment better, since the dreadful and obstinate heats which we have for a month endured have ceased; but it is in general so uncertain, so wavering, that I dare not any longer entertain projects of travelling. I see myself reduced to vegetate, and languish, in an unfortunate country, where letters are more degraded, more oppressed, and more persecuted than ever; where the priests are despised, yet potent; where genius is insulted, during life and after death; where, in a word, nothing could at present detain me, except the extreme danger of change of place. How great would be my consolation, nay my pleasure, to deposit all my griefs in the bosom of your majesty, with a detail of the wrongs done to reason and justice, in France. Let me entreat you still to preserve the same bounty which so long has constituted my glory and my felicity, and which is at present my only consolation and resource.

I am, with the most profound, the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXC VII.

From the King.

October 2, 1780.

I AM very sorry that your state of health is so bad as to deprive me of the hope of ever seeing you more. I flattered myself your malady was only temporary, and not attended by consequences so serious. We are reduced therefore to appoint a rendezvous at the valley of Jehosaphat, where some ascetic devotees pretend there is much amusement. Perhaps I there shall learn the subject of your complaints and dissatisfaction, of which I am the more ignorant because I have not heard that you at present meet with the least persecution. Europe supposes you as happy as a philosopher can be. I am well informed that it is customary, with priests, to treat the dead bodies of philosophers with indignity, at which I imagined philosophers laughed. We need but give putrefaction time to act, and it will so pestiferate the defunct that the living will soon be obliged to grant interment; and I dare venture to hope that it is indifferent, to philosophers, in what ground the caprice of men shall assign them a sepulchre.

I know not whether letters are despised or honoured

noured in France, but I perceive a dearth of genius. The thrones of literature become vacant for want of successors, and all Europe feels a scarcity of great men.

I come to Voltaire, to whom you appoint a cenotaph in the catholic church of Berlin. I do not think he would be pleased with his situation. It will be better to place his bust in the academy, where there is no superstition to tread under foot, and where the memory of a great man, who added so many talents to so much genius, may serve as an encouragement to men of letters, and incite them to deserve a like suffrage from posterity.

We are both old; let us rest satisfied with having seen the glory of an age which did honour to the human mind, and to which you have contributed. To the splendid days, during which Cicero, Virgil, and Horace flourished, succeeded the times of Seneca and Pliny; and to these barbarism. After the degradation of the human mind came the renovation of the sciences. Let vicissitude have its reign, and let us bless Heaven we came into the world in good times, and have been the contemporaries of men of talents and genius. With respect to priests, they will remain incorrigible till the whole race be extirpated.

pated. I hope to hear better news of your health.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CXCVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, November 3, 1780.

IT is now, this day, November the third, exactly twenty years since your majesty was covered with glory, in the plains of Torgau, by wresting that victory from the Austrians which they flattered themselves they had carried. To this your majesty has since added the glory of being the pacificator and avenger of Germany, the reformer of laws in your own states, and in Europe the model of warriors and of kings. How great is the distance, as Terence has said, between man and man ! And with what sorrowful conviction does this come home to my mind, when I approach, for I dare not say compare myself to, your majesty. The little strength I had twenty years ago, in my corporal, intellectual, and moral faculties, has almost totally disappeared. The only energy that remains is in the

the profound sentiment which attaches me to your majesty ; while you still preserve, in all their vigour, the rare qualities which have rendered you so respectable to Europe, during forty years that you have sat upon the throne. You even preserve your cheerfulness, as I with rapture perceive in the last letter you did me the honour to write. You laugh, with reason, at the follies of men ; at which I should do well to laugh also, and at which I certainly should laugh like you, did I digest and sleep better. The pleasure I took in labour was formerly my support, my every thing ; fatigued as I am by an hour's application, I no longer have that resource, and gloom comes over me. I do not indeed endure any great pain either of body or mind, but I am in that languid state of both which renders man wholly insensible. Nature formed mine a feeble frame ; whereas she gave your majesty nerves proportionate to the vigour and extent of your genius.

The sculptor, whom I often visit, that I may hasten him, promises me he will very soon have finished the bust of Voltaire, with which I hope your majesty will be perfectly satisfied. Since your majesty so thinks proper, we must renounce seeing his statue in the church of Berlin, treading Superstition and Fanaticism under foot. I

own, fire, I regret the want of such a monument; especially when I recollect it would have been erected by command of your majesty, and would have retraced, to the memory of future ages, the honours which Augustus rendered Virgil.

Would your majesty believe that they refuse, here, to permit his family to erect a very modest mausoleum, to his memory, in the obscure little country church where he is buried? It is even said the priests have secretly dug up his body, to cast it on the dunghill. There is no great harm in that, either to himself or those who are interested in his memory; but it would be strange if government, not loving though it fears the priests, should have consented to such an indignity; nor can I believe it has consented.

These priests, whom your majesty contemns because you have nothing to fear from them, have powerful protectors here, and oppose the progress of reason and knowledge with increasing fury. A work, the subject of which is most indifferent, to that vermin, must not see the day, unless permitted by them, or their hirelings; some of whom, by the aid of hunger and meanness, they procure among men of letters. Such inquisition confines and freezes every mind; the abuse which the pulpit vomits against reason,
and

M. B. L.

and its defenders, abuse which is supported by imbecile or fanatic magistrates, completes the degradation and discouragement of every thing most enlightened, and most estimable, in the nation.

I speak not of this misfortune as it relates to myself; I am rather a spectator than a slave in the galley, in which I stand with folded arms, well determined never more to print; or, if ever, it shall be in a country where truth may freely express itself, without offence to the king, the administration, the morals, or the honour of any man. But I see so many men of letters suffering under this persecution, this abominable inquisition, that I cannot forbear to pity, though I cannot partake their pains; nearly as an old lover is interested in the fate of a woman whom he once tenderly loved.

Happy, sire, are the men who, like you, can command opinion, safely condemn knaves and fools, instruct their species without the fear of fanaticism, and oblige them, even in their own despite, to be tolerant, moderate, and rational. May you, sire, long afford men lessons, laws, and examples like these!

I am, with the most profound and the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CXCIX.

From the King.

Undated.*

MANY men have won battles, and conquered provinces; but few have written a work so perfect as the preface to the *Encyclopedie*. As it is a rare thing justly to appreciate all human learning, and a more common one to put those to flight who previously were in fear, I think, after summing up votes, the labours of the philosopher must be adjudged superior to those of the general. If we consider each according to their utility, extensive and correct knowledge is preserved for ever, and transmitted in books to the most distant posterity; whereas the temporary success of war, by which only a few people, in a small corner of Europe, are interested, is forgotten as soon as acquired. So much for the philosopher and the warrior.

I now come to the nerves; and that yours and mine may be comparatively judged of, I propose that some able surgeon should dissect us both. Let us wait with a little patience and then

* This letter, in the Basil edition, is number CLXXVIII. Its contents shew where it ought to be placed, T.

these

these gentlemen may discuss, most profoundly, on the nervous system of the French philosopher and the Teutonic soldier. I foresee they will affirm that the finest nerves, and those that vibrate most easily, compose feeble constitutions, and ductile minds; and that the more robust nerves are proper only for porters, gladiators, and plowmen. Be comforted, therefore, my dear Anaxagoras, for your small share of health, since yours is the better part; for the advantages of mind are, in every sense, preferable to those of body. You have only one generous effort to make that you may banish all gloomy sensations, by which your ideas are clouded. Even when we lose that first ardour of youth which often is impetuous, we ought most carefully to preserve a certain fund of cheerfulness, which, with the aid of hope, may enable us to bear the load of life.

Though tonsured and mitred heads make new efforts to extend their mental tyranny, you are supplied with the arms of ridicule; and the darts of satire, sharpened by wit, will overthrow the pontiff and the idol of fanaticism at one and the same shock. Your bigotted enemies with philosophers should weep; laugh, and they will be confounded. If you will enrol me among your light troops, I make you an offer of my very

R. 2

humble

humble services, and will merrily attack the Sorbonne in a body; your Beaumont, archbishop by the wrath instead of the grace of God; your Braschi* of Monte Cavallo; and more still should the interests of the military association so demand. This is all I can do; and, as goose-quills are our weapons, which no man in our countries can prevent us from handling, and as our presses groan for a supply of nonsense, you need but assign me my task; to fulfil it shall be my endeavour.

What you tell me relative to the unworthy treatment of the corpse of Voltaire, by your monks, excites me to take vengeance on the rascals who dare thus to exercise their impotent rage, against the finest genius France ever produced. I beg you to send me the bust of that rare and singular man. His effigies shall be placed in our sanctuary of the sciences, where he may take up his abode; whereas, should we assign him residence in the church, his shade would take offence: not to mention the dangers to which his statue would be exposed after my death, when perhaps false zeal would lead some priest, flaming with fanaticism, to mutilate or break the image of the apostle of toleration †.

* The Pope. T.

† A late edict, dated Potsdam, July 9, 1788, in which, though

I now return to the beginning of your letter, in which the question was our nerves, to inform you that I have had the gout four weeks successively ; that I have suffered much ; and that, by the aid of regimen, I have expelled the marasmus and the malady. My fingers are not benumbed ; and, if priests be brought in question, I shall, aided by ink, overflow them with my heretical gall. Courage, my dear Anaxagoras ; collect your strength, renovate your good humour, or raise it from the dead !

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CC.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, December 15, 1780.

The anniversary of the battle of Kesselsdorf.

EACH letter, with which your majesty honours me, awakens in me those sentiments of gratitude, veneration, and tenderness, with

though every man be allowed to *think* as he please, he is forbidden to *communicate* his thoughts, and in which the supposed increase of impiety in Prussia, with indirect allusions to the late reign, are declaimed against, render it probable that Frederic here foresaw what really would have happened. T

which I have so long been penetrated. But, however profound these are in me, there are others by which I am at present occupied. One more dear, if possible, at present employs my whole soul; for it relates more immediately to your majesty, and originates in the news we have received of the death of the empress queen. This intelligence, interesting at all times, appears particularly so at present, from the effects which may be the consequences. It is known, or believed, that the empress loved peace, at least toward the end of her life; and to this inclination, supported by your majesty's arms, Europe is indebted for the peace of Teschen. Men fear this propensity, so praise-worthy and so desirable in a prince, is not at present to be found at the court of Vienna, and that Europe will soon be plunged into new wars. Should such a misfortune follow, it would be impossible for your majesty to refrain taking up arms; and I dread lest new fatigues, and new labours, should injure your majesty's health. I am not, sire, disturbed concerning your glory, but infinitely in behalf of your repose and preservation. You have no need of renown; for what can be added to that which, during a space of forty years, has been said of you? But you have great need to lead a mild and tranquil life, and
still

still long to enjoy the love of your people, the admiration of Europe, and the homage of all thinking men.

An humble and obscure philosopher has not the temerity to rush into the councils of princes, and inquire into their secrets; but he may be permitted to tremble for the life of those whom he loves and reveres. I ask pardon of your majesty for this expansion of heart, which seems like an intention to penetrate secrets and political mysteries; but it was what I could not refuse this heart of mine, and your majesty cannot be angry that I am so much occupied in thinking on you. On you, sire, the eyes of Europe are at present fixed; she regards you as her tutelary deity, and exclaims—"Strengthen the peace you have so gloriously bestowed!"—France participates these sentiments. What would become of her, if a continental war were to be added to that in which she is already engaged, by sea?

I have but too much wearied your majesty, by a subject on which I find it difficult to be silent. I shall therefore pass to things of less importance, and consequently things that disturb me less.

The bust of Voltaire is finished, agreeable to your majesty's desire. The artist has exerted

his utmost attention. It will this week be packed up, with all possible precaution, and will arrive safe and sound at Berlin.

You lay a snare, fire, for my vanity, but into which I shall not fall. You compare the preface to the *Encyclopædie* to all you have effected of great and memorable, in peace and war, in politics, in government, and letters themselves; though the last have only been your recreation. But how far am I from success like this; and how little worthy of such renown! How great even is the difference between our corporal powers! You, fire, who are four years older than I am, have resisted fatigues, and shocks, by which my poor frame would immediately have been crumbled to dust. I should sink under the hundred thousandth part of what your majesty performs in a single day. You have all Europe upon your mind; while a page of bad prose, or a few lines of calculation, make me, a paltry scribbler, feel how much I am fallen from the little I was; although the height is assuredly not great. To render the evil as light as possible, it is essential to be resigned to the will of fate; to listen to the voice of nature, and to husband her powers; to oppose her irregularities by regimen, and her weakness by rest, that I may drag on my few remaining days with as
little

little pain as possible. This, well or ill, it shall be my endeavour to effect.

Your majesty will receive this letter about the beginning of the coming year, which will be the forty-first of your reign; a reign that will furnish so many fine traits to history, so many examples to sovereigns, so many lessons to generals and politicians, and so much admiration to sages. May its splendid duration be lengthened; and may I, when called to Elysium or to Tartarus, leave your majesty behind! In fine, may I, while a single breath shall remain, more and more convince you of the tender and profound veneration with which I shall, to the last sigh, &c.

L E T T E R CCI.

From the King.

January 16, 1781.

I BELIEVE the best consequences that can be drawn from philosophy are such as will render life supportable; and that nothing makes existence more agreeable than a certain tranquillity of soul, which banishes those cares, and gloomy ideas, by which it is disturbed. This

I would

I would prove, could I persuade myself that an ignorant person, of my stamp, could shed serenity over the mind of a great philosopher; that is, over the mind of our modern Anaxagoras. But I think it more probable that this great philosopher should be self-determined to recover that decent cheerfulness which is the characteristic attribute of the French. For my part, I approach the state of inanity to which age conducts all dotards. I see those born and die whose turn it is to enter, or to leave, the world; I see but am not disturbed.

I have notwithstanding regretted the death of the empress queen. She was an honour to the throne, and to her sex. I have made war on her, yet never was her enemy. The son of that great woman, the emperor, I have seen, and he appears to me too enlightened to be precipitate in his plans. I esteem but do not fear him; and, with respect to possible contingencies, it appears to me that mathematicians, who can subject them to calculation, are better able to penetrate the future than the men whom we call politicians, who often do not see to the end of their nose. That being so, you will make a greater progress with three curves than I with my vain conjectures, which do not approach the certainty of calculation. Were a general congress of the
sovereigns

sovereigns of Europe assembled, I should certainly give it as my opinion that peace and harmony ought to reign among the whole. The ifs, however, on this subject would be infinite. The most certain mode, in such circumstances, is to abandon ourselves to the decrees of destiny, concerning what shall hereafter happen; and, when these decrees come, to receive them with entire resignation.

To afford you a proof of my tranquillity, I send you a small pamphlet, which tends to point out the defects of German literature, and indicate the means of improvement. Colonel Grimm, who is a German, can inform you of every thing that relates to a language which you have not studied, and which hitherto has not deserved the trouble of learning. For a language does not deserve to be studied, till good authors have first rendered it famous; and of these we are entirely destitute. They will perhaps appear, when I shall be walking in the Elysian fields, where I shall present to the Mantuan swan the idylles of a German named Gesner, and the fables of Gellert. You will laugh at the trouble I have taken, to infuse into a nation whose knowledge, hitherto, has consisted in eating, drinking, making love and fighting, ideas of good taste and Attic salt. Still I have a wish to be useful; and

a grain thrown into fertile land often sprouts, and becomes unexpectedly productive.

May the ensuing year be as fruitful in favourable incidents to you, and philosophy, as I wish! May you long occupy the chair of reason, from which you instruct the Gauls! Such are the prayers I daily make, for the modern Anaxagoras.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, February 9, 1781.

I HAVE just received the excellent work, on German literature, which your majesty has done me the honour to send, and which you mentioned in your letter of the sixth of January. I sent the copy to M. Grimm, which was destined for him, without delay, according to your majesty's commands; nor did I lose a moment again and again to read this new literary and philosophic production of your majesty. I there found the most sound principles of literature, with a fund of reason and good taste, such as might be expected from a philosophic writer,
nurtured

nurtured by the study of good examples, and worthy to become himself an example.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with German literature, to judge whether your majesty's reproaches be or be not well founded ; but I rely, without difficulty, on your enlightened judgment, concerning a subject on which I am ignorant. The just and true manner, in which you appreciate our French men of letters, persuades me there is equal justice in your estimate of the men of letters of your own country ; and the means you propose, to remedy the difficulties you bewail, appear to me the most sane and useful. Not but it is said that the Germans complain of having been censured with too much rigor. This appears to me natural enough ; but it is no proof that there is reason in their complaints.

I have discovered but one passage, in all this excellent work, which is liable to criticism, and which would in certain respects be ill founded. Your majesty says, in the thirty-sixth page, we will cite, among the Latin writers, the Manual of Epictetus and the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius. You no doubt mean only to speak of the translations of these two works, which indeed were written at Rome, and which make them in some manner appertain to the Latin writers ;
but

but your majesty is not ignorant that the originals of both are in Greek. In a second edition, it will be well for your majesty to explain yourself something more precisely, on that subject, to avoid all ambiguity, and take from the German journalists every pretext to make a dull commentary on it, as usual.

Enough, sire, on the Germans, notwithstanding they have the honour to have you for their countryman and sovereign. I hasten to another topic, not less worthy of praise perhaps than your excellent work. I mean the eloquence, the good taste, and the dignity of the eulogium you made on the empress queen, in the last letter you did me the honour to write. I have read it to all my acquaintance, and all my acquaintance admired it as much as myself. All exclaimed this princess could not have a more beautiful funeral oration; and added that the few following words ought to be engraven upon her tomb—"Here lies Maria Theresa, empress-queen of Hungary and of Bohemia. The great Frederic, her cotemporary, has said of her—*"She was an honour to the throne, and to her sex. I made war upon her, yet never was her enemy."*

We had a public assembly, on the twenty-fifth of January last, at the French Academy, for the admission of two new members. The
abbé

abbé Delille, who received them, and who in his discourse introduced a word on the empress-queen, added, that he could not praise her with more eloquence than your majesty : he then repeated your words, and the hall resounded with applause. I have more than once had occasion, in my discourses before this body, to express my sentiments for your majesty, and to speak of your fame and your works, and the public have always joined chorus ; for the public have that veneration for you which you merit as a warrior and a philosopher.

I am informed, sire, there is now at Berlin a young man of learning, named Mayer*, who has lately published an excellent history of Switzerland, in the German language, which history has been translated into French. I am told it abounds in philosophy and bold truths ; that the author is able to write in French ; that he desires to fix his residence in Prussia ; and that the academy would in him make an excellent acquisition, should your majesty think proper to grant him the moderate pension of four hundred crowns per annum, with which he would be satisfied, till by his labours he should obtain higher re-

* The name is erroneously printed Muller, in both editions. T.

wards. Your majesty may enquire concerning this man of letters; and, as I interest myself in the good of your academy, I take the liberty to request your majesty's favour in behalf of M. Mayer, should you think him worthy to obtain it, after these enquiries have been made.

I have only room to renew the ardent wishes I incessantly make for your majesty's happiness, for the increase of your glory if that be possible, for your health, your repose, and your preservation. I am informed, by letter, that your majesty's health is better than ever, and I exclaim; with the ancient—"Then are the gods sometimes just!"

I am, with the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CCIII.

From the King.

February 24, 1781.

THE work I have sent you is the work of a dilettante, who, taking part in the fame of his nation, is desirous the progress in literature of that nation should equal the progress of surrounding nations, which are some ages in advance. Far from being severe, I have chastised only with a rod of roses. We ought not to inspire

spire despair, when we wish to encourage; we should, on the contrary, let those whom we would rouse from their lethargy perceive they are in possession of talents, and only in want of the will to bring these talents to perfection. To this there can be no greater obstacle than clownish pedantry, and want of taste.

Genius, I own, is a thing less common than it is supposed. Men who would have performed miracles, of one kind, not having found their proper place, have not acted the same wonders of another. In the schools and universities of my country, I have introduced the method of instruction which I have proposed; and I promise myself the consequences will be advantageous.

I willingly sign my own condemnation, respecting Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. You know that the Latin language is much more general, in Germany, than the Greek. Would our men of letters but apply themselves to translate the ancients well, they would by this means infuse more strength and energy into their mother tongue, which qualities it still wants.

You kindly interest yourself in my health; and, at the moment that you congratulate me on its good state, your letter finds me in the third fit of the gout, with which I have been laid up,

since my return to Berlin. These are acts of gallantry, with which age favours old men. But I comfort myself with the abbé de Chaulieu, and with all the gouty elders of the Old and New Testament. The disease incommodes me a little in holding my pen ; but we habituate ourselves to all things, and I exclaim with Posidonius—O gout ! Thou shalt not prevent me from writing to the sage Anaxagoras.

M. Mayer has been here, and I own I found him a man of minutiae. He has made inquiries concerning the Cimbri, and the Teutoni, for which I think myself under no obligations to him ; and has further written an analysis of universal history, in which he has studiously repeated what had before been better said. If men mean only to copy, books may be eternally increased ; but the public would not be profited. Genius does not fix its attention on trifles ; it either imagines things assuming new forms or yields to fancy ; or, which is still better, selects for itself new and interesting subjects. But our Germans have the disease which is called *λογων διαρρεα* *, of which to cure them would be a task more difficult than to strike them dumb. Here however are words enough for a gouty man ; not

* A flux of words.

but I was in a good train to have bestowed many more on you, had not my hand, perhaps very opportunely, stopped me short, that I might not weary you.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, March 30, 1784.

THE last letter your majesty did me the favour to write, left me alarmed, both for the present and the future. A person who had the honour to be present with your majesty, for some time, wrote me word that he never had seen you in better health. I was eager to send my congratulations; and, while I and my friends were all rejoicing, for the good news, your majesty was suffering the third violent fit of the gout, by which you had this winter been attacked. Though you have had the goodness to inform me you are entirely freed from it, I dread a relapse, this accursed long winter not being entirely concluded; especially not at five degrees north of Paris; we here still light our fires.

The more deeply I was affected, by your majesty's illness, the more tenderly grateful am I for the bounty with which you have been pleased to speak to me on the subject, and for assuring me that this infernal gout shall not deprive me of your letters. These, sire, are to me more than ever necessary; they are my only consolation, and re-animate the insipidity of my existence, which was become little better than vegetation, by my ill state of health. I am entirely deprived of all labour, if I mean to preserve the small remains of life that are left me.

But I would rather speak of your majesty than of myself; and, having in my last letter paid my respects to you concerning the eloquent though short eulogium you wrote on the empress queen, I take the liberty to congratulate you, at present, on a different subject, on the excellent answer you lately returned, to the petition of the Lutheran ministers of Berlin, relative to innovations made in the catechism, and singing psalms. If, on the one part, the importance which these priests annex to the subject of their petition be amusing, by being ridiculous, the answer of your majesty is, on the other, dictated by wisdom itself, armed with the most refined and delicate satire.—“ My intention
“ is that each of my subjects should regulate his
“ religious

“ religious affairs as he shall think proper ; and
 “ that all, without exception, should be free to
 “ sing and to believe how they please and what
 “ they please.” Oh, sire, how would Voltaire
 have laughed, had he read this charming an-
 swer ! What an excellent use would he have
 made of it, in the first pamphlet he should have
 printed, whether in verse or in prose ! How de-
 lightful, how proper is the expression—“ That
 “ each should regulate his religious affairs as he
 “ should think proper ; and should sing and be-
 “ lieve how he should please and what he should
 “ please !” How worthy is it to become the ex-
 ample of monarchs, whom divines with should
 interfere in their quarrels ; and who usually do
 interfere, with facility so degrading to them-
 selves, and so fatal to their people ! I dare as-
 sure your majesty these expressions, so inestima-
 ble to reason, have made their fortune as effec-
 tually, here, as your excellent eulogium on the
 empress queen ; and that they are at this mo-
 ment repeated, with bursts of laughter, by all
 thinking men, who, after the example of your
 majesty, condemn human superstitions, and theo-
 logical blunders. May fate and the gout per-
 mit you, sire, long to afford a like example to
 kings, of which most of them have so much
 need ; consolation so sweet to reason and good

ſenſe; and equally efficacious marks of contempt, for abſurd and atrocious fanaticiſm!

All your majeſty has done me the honour to inform me of, relative to the preſent ſtate of German literature, is full of taſte and information. I wiſh and hope the reform, propoſed by your majeſty, may, by its ſucceſs, be worthy of the philoſophic and reforming hero by whom it has been preſcribed. Our univerſities in France, and particularly that of Paris, are in great need of a legiſlator like you; for they are ſtill deeply incruſted with prejudices of every kind, exceedingly ignorant and bigotted.

I depend entirely on your majeſty's judgment, in what relates to M. Mayer, of whom I had the honour to ſpeak. Wonders had been written to me of him, to which I gave faith ſufficiently implicit to aſk your majeſty how far you were acquainted with that man of letters. At preſent, I am well informed of his worth; and, exceedingly tranquil concerning the part which your majeſty may take, I willingly believe that German men of letters are ſtill very ill of the complaint which your majeſty ſo pleaſantly calls a flux of words. Were they to hear, or rather to liſten, more frequently and more attentively to your majeſty, they would learn from you to
ſay

say only what was proper ; and to say this in a proper manner.

A precept so sage reminds me it is time to end my philosophic and literary prattle ; which I conclude better than I began it, by renewing those sentiments of profound gratitude, veneration, and tenderness, for your majesty, with which, to the tomb, I shall, &c.

LETTER CCV.

From the King.

April 13, 1781.

THE will of Nature is that health and hope should introduce us to the world, to delude us concerning the evils which await us ; and, by excess of precaution, this same Nature, fearing we should be too much attached to the vile life she bestowed, sends sickness and infirmities, that we may renounce it with less regret. In this last class we are both included. We are each day suffering new losses, and sending off our heavy baggage in the van, well assured that we are soon to follow. I have freed myself from the gout, with which I was incommoded by abstinence and regimen. I now think no more

of it, though I prepare for some new visit from this importunate guest. While France bravely makes war by sea on the English, I have fought with the gout, which I have taken by famine. It were to be wished the Spaniards could do as much by Gibraltar.

We have had a trifling commotion in the church, concerning a subject of great importance. You know that the protestants believe the Deity is delighted by their singing; and I know not what German poet imagined he discovered a crowd of ridiculous things, in their fine songs; he therefore wrote new ones, more worthy as he imagined of the supreme Being. This was productive of a scission of the church; one party being for the old and the other for the new version. The people, without knowing why, exclaimed—Herefy! The priests, jealous of, wished to anathematise, each other. The booksellers interfered; some of them had whole editions of the new version, which they wished to sell; others had their shops full of the old, of which they never would have rid themselves, had the new been victorious.

In the heat of the conflict, the parties mutually appealed to me; and I, like an impartial judge, determined each should praise God as
he

he thought proper. Thus was peace re-established in the church of Berlin.

Be pleased however to admire, while you behold an infidel made the unworthy instrument to appease schism, which had taken birth in the flock of the elect ! Plato formerly served as the founder of the Christian religion. Voltaire employed the whole sagacity of his genius to render priests rational and tolerant ; but the plan of the latter was too daring, and was not accomplished.

A pleasant adventure has happened in the empire. A prince, a great friend to your Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, has a wife aged fifty-three. This prince became acquainted with a fanatic priest, who promised him his wife should become pregnant, if they would but let mafs be said upon her belly ; adding, he must acquire faith of a very robust complexion, to render the charm efficacious. Mafs accordingly was so performed, and the wife of the prince imagined herself with child. Midwives, male and female, with witnesses, were called in ; but unfortunately the miracle failed, because the prince had not sufficient faith.

Pray take note that this farce has been acted in the present philosophic age ; in the eighteenth century ; during which reason it is said is brought to perfection. What poor creatures are we ! It
should

should seem as if nature had sent us into the world to believe and to commit follies. Still do we swell with pride. I wish you could be restored to health, and vigour, by having mafs laid upon your belly ! But, as fuch quackery is repugnant to philosophy, you must confine yourself to regimen, which is more efficacious than mafs. I wish sincerely to hear of your better health, and that you are able to work as formerly.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCVI.

From M. D' Alembert.

S I R E, Paris, May 11, 1781. The anniversary of the battle of Fontenoy, which happened ten years before the treaty of Versailles.

YOUR majesty remarks, in the last letter you have done me the honour to write, that you and I daily suffer new losses, and that we send off our heavy baggage in the van, well assured we are soon to follow. As far as this relates to me, it is but too true ; but, with respect to yourself, permit me to say, I am not of your opinion. Judging by your letters, I think on the contrary
that

that you grow younger every day; so pleasant and excellently humorous are they. Your majesty's observations, on the quarrel of the ministers of Berlin, are written in the very best taste, worthy of the cause submitted to your majesty, and of the wisdom of a great king. Alas, sire, (and this is the reflection of all to whom I have read that passage in your letter) why have not other sovereigns had, and why have they not yet, such follies in equal contempt? How much blood, how much misery, would they have spared the stupid and deplorable human race! Here have we a bishop of Amiens, a bigot, the successor of him who demanded the death of the chevalier de la Barre—here have we, I say, this bishop of Amiens, Machault by name, the son of a former comptroller-general of finances, who has lately issued a frenetic mandate, against the edition which is preparing of the works of Voltaire. Had we the wit in France to impose silence upon these ringers of the alarm bell, they would have neither partisans nor imitators. Perhaps the necessity of repressing them will at length be seen, for the honour of reason and the repose of the public. God grant your good example may be followed!

It seems the emperor is at present treating the priests, the monks, and the pope, in rather a cavalier

cavalier manner. It is to be hoped this first act of Imperial hostility will have more serious consequences. Amen. So be it.

I am, with the most tender and profound veneration, &c.

L E T T E R C C V I I .

From the King.

May 28, 1781.

HE who is on the verge of his seventieth year ought to be ready to decamp, whenever the trumpet shall sound to horse. Having lived long, we become acquainted with the insignificance of mundane affairs; and, wearied by the ebb and flow of good and evil, which incessantly succeed each other, we cannot but quit life without regret. When we have not what was formerly called the hypochondria, and which is at present more elegantly entitled the vapours, we ought cheerfully to face the period which will put an end to our follies, and our torments; and to rejoice that death comes to deliver us from those passions which damn us. After mature reflection on these grave matters, I intend to preserve my good humour as long as this paltry and frail machine

chine shall endure; and I advise you to do the same. Far from complaining of my approaching end, I ought to apologize to the public for having had the impertinence to live so long; for having wearied and teased mankind, and for having been a charge upon the world for three-fourths of a century, which is really past all joking.

I quit this subject, which may appear to you too gloomy, to thank you for the anecdote of the emperor Leopold, which I found in your letter. Saints, it must be owned, cannot but have resources with which the profane are unacquainted. Among us, the work of propagation is one of the most common of physical acts. Among the saints, all is performed by miracle. But unfortunately miracles are not continually successful, in this perverse age. What however the prince lost in masses he gained in ridicule, which he drew on himself by his folly.

I, like you, have heard that the Cæsar Joseph has some disputes with the holy father, relative to a mass, which he would not say for Maria Theresa. I dare presume they will accommodate matters, at the death of the duke of Modena; and that the vicar of Jesus Christ will cede the dutchy of Ferrara to the descendants of Austria Lorrain; which cession will at least be equal

equal to a mass; and the soul of Maria Theresa, hearing the news, will vault from purgatory into paradise. This assertion is merely hypothetical. I am a layman, and it appertains only to the Sorbonne to declare what passes in heaven and in purgatory, as in hell.

I forgot to inform you that, a few days since, I met with a prince of Salm, at Berlin, who is fresh imported from Paris, and who overwhelmed me with shame. Compared to him, I found myself so stupid, so awkward, so silly, that I scarcely had courage to give him an answer. The graces are kneaded up in his dough; every gesture is far fetched elegance, and every word a riddle. He discusses and penetrates the very abyss of trifles with infinite dexterity; and is better read in the map of the whole empire of ogles than all the Scuderis in the universe. "Ah! Father "Bouhours," cried I, "I am obliged to own "you are in the right; and that, beyond the "walls of Paris, nothing can be discovered, except that gross common sense which is not worth "mentioning." Perhaps the poet, who wrote the verses addressed to cardinal de Bernis, had his brain full of the reflections of Rochefoucault, and supposed that all our actions originate in no other principle than that of self-love and vanity.

The cardinal might answer him that it is as easy to censure as it is difficult to act.

For my part, being a great advocate for indulgence, because I feel I have often need of it when I appear before the world, I think no man should be condemned without having first been heard. You further know that it is improper for superiors to be judged by their inferiors; and the dignity of a cardinal raises him above all the kings on earth; wherefore, * * * * *

I am at present making the tour of the Prussian provinces, which tumultuous occupation will continue till the fifteenth of next month; when, returning to my little hermitage, I then can write to you more at my ease, and with greater gaiety.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCVIII.

From the King.

June 22, 1781.

I AM acquainted with no Beaumont, except the archbishop of Paris, worthy to be archbishop to the devil, did that malevolent spirit exist,

exist, and were he worshipped by mankind. I was well acquainted with Beaumont the advocate, a man respectable for his eloquence and morals, and particularly for the generous courage with which he supported the cause of oppressed virtue; nor could I refuse him my esteem. But, as for the abbé de Beaumont, of whom you speak, I know nothing of him, except from the discourse which you have had the goodness to send me.

This good abbé deprives me of all utterance; he has unfortunately thought proper to say such obliging and such flattering things of me that I can only admire, and be silent. Ah, my dear D'Alembert, let us occasionally repeat the wisest saying that ever escaped Solomon—Vanity of vanities! The vanity of fame! Man is an atom, plunged into the ocean of eternity; one moment he is born and the next dies; and he is most perfect who has least vice. His days are passed in building and pulling down. Can a being of such a species deserve panegyric! Let the names of those who have taught us to till the earth, to grind corn, to knead, and to quench our thirst by grateful liquors, be perpetuated! Let the memory of those who persuaded men to sacrifice a part of their individual interest to the general good remain! But what shall I say of others?

others? They have been praised only because they have been talked of; and their enthusiasts are the first to drive wasps and hornets from their chambers, which sting as they buz; but forbear to molest the flies, because they are less troublesome.

This does not relate to the good Theresa, who, released from purgatory by the efficacy of masses said for her soul's repose, now keeps turning her rosary in Paradise. These wasps and hornets refer to a certain inhabitant of the shores of the Baltic, to whom twenty years ago you paid a visit.

A few days since I read the following lines :

*César n'a point d'asile, où son ombre repose ;
Et l'ami Pompignan croit être quelque chose*.*

I often repeat this distich; especially when eloquent pens or lips distil elaborate and subtle incense, which intoxicates the poor brain that is destitute of philosophy. While priests incessantly exclaim, from their pulpits—"No reasoning! No reasoning!"—I wish men incessantly exclaimed, in the ears of princes—"No pride! No pride!—Remember thy first habi-

* César finds no asylum in which his shade reposes; while Friend Pompignan believes himself somebody.

“tation was between the *intestinum rectum* and “the vesica!” I own that, had Quelus, Maugiron, Luynes, the old duke of Richelieu, and in a word the courtiers of your kings, whispered some such agreeable things, in their master’s ear, the fortune of these favourites would have been less splendid. But, perhaps, were men thus sincere, Henry III. would have less persecuted the heretics; perhaps Louis XIII. would have been more sparing of the blood of his subjects; perhaps Genoa would not have been bombarded, under Louis XIV.; perhaps the chamber of reunion would not have been erected; and perhaps, in the year 1672, the Dutch would have remained in peace; which would have been advantageous to poor humanity. You great philosophers must decide, on reflections, thrown out at a venture, by an insignificant German. In the mean time, my monade salutes yours, and entreats you, whenever you wish to think of the being that vegetates on the banks of the Spree, that you would employ the tube of the abbé de Beaumont; otherwise you may view the fine phantom which the abbé has created through a false medium.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCIX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, June 29, 1781.

I IMAGINE your majesty is at present returned from your military tour, and again are seated in your philosophic retreat. I eagerly therefore do myself the honour to answer your last charming letter, notwithstanding the remains, which I still feel, of two or three fits of fever, which have left me weak, but which may have done me good, by ridding me, according to the physicians, of some peccant and morbid matter. The excellent lesson your majesty has been pleased to give me, on the hypochondria, now more elegantly termed the vapours, makes me fear, to the disgrace of my reason, that your majesty supposes I am attacked by this disease. But no such thing; I can assure you, I contemplate the decay of my corporal and intellectual faculties with a cold and philosophic eye. As this decay is the consequence of age, I being now sixty-four, and the long labours with which my poor head is fatigued (for all heads, sire, and mine especially, are not of the same force as yours) I console myself by thinking such is the fate of mankind;

T 2

and

and that he who, like me, is slowly journeying toward the other world, without any great sufferings either of body or of mind, is one of those human creatures who is most favoured by Providence.

I have not the honour to know, not even by sight, the prince of Salm, of whom your majesty is pleased to speak. The life I lead deprives me of the advantage of encountering this elegant species. But those who are acquainted with this prince have spoken of him exactly in the same manner as your majesty. The ideas with which he inspired you are exactly conformable to those entertained of him, by the few reasonable people with whom he by chance associated. These are the gentlemen, fire, who inspire foreigners with an idea so little favourable to the French nation, but whom fortunately the nation does not totally resemble. I am acquainted indeed with no country in which there are not, at once, two nations in the same nation; evidently different, evidently distinct, and between whom there is nothing in common; like a river, the waters of which, from their confluence to an exceedingly great distance, flow after each other without ever mingling. This, fire, is an ample subject; but it is one of which we must treat only in a whisper; and to do this I am unfortunately

unately too distant from your majesty. I only can allow myself to add, as a specimen of our double national character, that, on one hand, good citizens and sages are most desirous to see an end to a war which has hitherto been exceedingly ruinous, without much advantage; and that, on the other, our fashionable gentry are solely occupied by the hasty rebuilding of the opera-house, which has lately been entirely burnt down.

Your majesty would be highly amused, too, by all the contradictory reports you would hear, in our societies, relative to the recent retreat of M. Necker; another subject for deep reflection; but which must not pass through the hands of those honest clerks, who read letters at the post-office; whose eyesight, of which they make so worthy and so noble a use, God preserve!

The Cæsar Joseph, as your majesty calls him, is said at present to be at Versailles, incognito; or is every moment expected there, without intending to shew his face at Paris. We reason and prate much on the subject of his journey. If it be, as is affirmed, to negotiate peace, may God second his efforts! It seems to me, judging from public report, that this prince rather ill treats the holy father, and his livery-men, both monastic and secular. He goes so far, it is said,

as to grant liberty and naturalization to the Jews; which the august emperors, his ancestors, would have regarded as the most heinous of crimes! To you, sire, must humanity and philosophy return thanks, for all which sovereigns do, and cause to be done, to favour toleration and repress fanaticism; for it was your majesty who first set them the great example; in itself so beautiful, and so easy of imitation; but which however they have hitherto imitated so little. In the language of the holy scripture, let us pray to the King of Kings, that their majesties may grow wiser.

I am, with the most profound and tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CCX.

From the King.

July 14, 1781.

HERE am I, returned from the Sarmatian frontiers, which I have visited, and happy once more to find myself in my cell. It is for the prince of Salm, and such red-heeled fops, to make the world resound with their fame, and their follies. My age induces me to retire from their
whole

whole crew, and to pass the remainder of my days with the ancients, whom I soon shall join; keeping myself apart from the moderns, with whom it is not worth while to form an acquaintance. Do not think, I entreat you, while you read this beginning, that I have the vapours, for this I assure you is not the fact. I see my thread gliding through the fingers of the Parcæ, and shortening, yet am not moved by the sight. Daily experience is a school which teaches us the mutability of our existence. The particles which escape by imperceptible perspiration, the various secretions of the body, and phlebotomy, accustom us to die inch-meal. Tamed to the loss of a part of ourselves, we acquire constancy to behold, with a stoic eye, the total dissolution of the matter of which we are formed. Yet, when imagination forsakes us, and when the memory becomes treacherous, and the sight feeble and confused, self-love rises in arms, in the generality of mankind, against time, which robs them of qualities which they imagined to be indelible. The admiration in which they held their pretended perfections excites the most ridiculous regret in them, for the loss of some temporary properties of their being; and they do not recollect that they were nothing, in the

preceding age, and that they shall be nothing, in the next.

Old men might well find cause of consolation, by reflecting that they have no true friends, except in their contemporaries; and that friendship, a blessing so inestimable to the sage, is to him for ever lost, should he survive the second or third generation. The different modes of thinking, and of acting, are too opposite to assimilate; they therefore see themselves deserted in society; like as we behold old oaks in forests, which have resisted the injuries of the weather, with their tops dry and withered, yet overlooking the young surrounding trees. But, though such reflections do not affect me, they may perhaps be too gloomy for a philosopher, who lives encircled by the Sybarites of the Seine.

Let us therefore assume more cheerful subjects. This Cæsar Joseph, whom you mention, confirms me in my propensity to the opinions of the acataleptic sect. Some say he is at Brussels; others at Paris; and I answer, like madame de Sevigné, I do not think he is at either place. He makes all the monks and abbés of his dominions tremble. Some pretend he hates the perjured, and obliges these gentlemen to an exact observance of the vow of poverty, which
they

they have taken. Here you see the good which war effects, in Christianity; for war costs immense sums, and princes borrow. New wars new debts, which must be paid. The treasury being empty, what is to be done? The only remedy is to strip the clergy of their wealth; and necessity obliges monarchs to recur to this sole remaining expedient. Were our Calvin a witness of these events, he would thus address us.

“ Admire, brethren, the impenetrable ways
 “ of Providence! The Being of Beings, who
 “ abhors the horrible and sacrilegious supersti-
 “ tion into which the church has fallen, makes
 “ not the voice of the sage the instrument to
 “ render truth triumphant; nor deigns to work
 “ miracles to root up error! What then is the
 “ instrument this being employs, for the de-
 “ struction of monks; and to cause those vile
 “ and impure organs of fanaticism to vanish,
 “ from the face of the earth?—Kings, brethren,
 “ kings! That is to say, the most ignorant spe-
 “ cies of men that crawl on the surface of this
 “ globe! And how does the great Demiurgos
 “ make these ignorant species promote his end?
 “ By their interest, brethren. Yes! Infamous
 “ interest! For once, thou shalt be useful to
 “ mankind; by exciting the passions of these
 “ demi-

“ demi-gods of the age, by bidding them pil-
“ lage the hoards of priests, thou shalt arm them
“ with a destructive falchion, to cut off the race
“ whose sacrilegious appetite and insatiate en-
“ trails were unceasingly crammed with flesh
“ and blood. Oh ! Altitudo, &c.”

It is not me, however, but John Calvin who says all this. Observe the protest, gentlemen of the post-office ; and, should your noble curiosity induce you to inquire into the contents of my letter, do not confound my name with that of Calvin. I too much respect the profound knowledge of the archbishop of Paris, and of his maker of mandates, to wish to give them offence. Neither can any person hold the unalterable folly of the antique Sorbonne, and its infallible decisions, in greater respect.

For your part, my dear Anaxagoras, let me beg you to remain persuaded how entirely I esteem you.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, July 30, 1781.

I BEGIN this letter by presenting to your majesty new homage, paid to you once again while writing the eulogium of Maria Theresa. It is the work of a young scholar of fourteen, of great hope, who thinks it his duty, young as he is, to join the voices of all Europe; and, in the sixth page, who speaks of your majesty, in tolerable good poetry, much the same as all Europe thinks. Should your majesty deign to empower me to give the least encouragement to this youth, he, like Horace, *will strike the heavens with his head*, proud to have obtained praise from so great a king; and I shall address your majesty in the words of the psalmist David—*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.*

I have, within a few days of each other, received two letters from your majesty, which are masterly performances of practical philosophy. Whoever should read these excellent letters, and not read the signature, would suppose them written by Epictetus, and never suspect they came from a king who, after having made the world

world resound with his name, looks down, with so much superiority and intelligence, on the insignificance of grandeur and human vanity. They prove how truly I have said, in the two lines which with others I have written under your majesty's picture—

*Modeste sur un trône, orné par la victoire,
Il sut apprécier et mériter la gloire.**

I know not what route the Cæsar Joseph will take, in his inquiries after this fame, which is so vain, yet so much sought after, but I think he will be more likely to find it by seizing on the revenues of the clergy than by seizing on Bavaria. Your majesty rightly observes that war, among all the evils which it brings on mankind, is at length productive of this desirable good, that princes transfer their debts to the priests and monks. The French, who *write* so many excellent things on this subject, and *perform* so few, will I believe be the last to do themselves justice; there still are too many priests at Versailles; yet do it they will, at last; were it only for the shame of being singular, and not acting according to reason.

This sacerdotal race, whom your majesty esti-

* Modest on the throne, adorned by conquest, he knew how to estimate and to merit fame.

mates at their true worth, and who, to the disgrace of France, are still in so much credit there, sometimes has pleasant adventures. I have lately been told that, about eight or ten years ago, a fanatic bishop wished to refuse giving what we call the *Bon Dieu* * to a poor devil of a fanatic Jansenist, who was dying. As the bishop was apprehensive the curate of the parish, in despite of his prohibition, would administer the sacrament to the Jansenist, he sent one of his grand vicars to consume, or, in other words, to eat up, all the *Bon Dieus* that could be found in the tabernacle, that not so much as one might remain for the poor sick man. The grand vicar obeyed; not one was left. But, as he had filled his flaggon brimful, the glutton was seized with an alarming indigestion. The physician was sent for, who foretold imminent danger, impossible to be avoided, except by an emetic. This the grand vicar pertinaciously refused to take; affirming, to the great astonishment of the physician, that vomit he would not; for the doctor could not comprehend the reason given him by the priest—that his *conscience would not permit him*. In fine, the priest died a martyr to his holy voracity. This, sir, is an excellent tale to put in rhyme; your majesty ought to versify it, and

* The good God; or, the Sacrament.

T.
dedicate

dedicate it to your friend, Christopher, or Christophilus, de Beaumont.

The orator, whose funeral oration I did myself the honour to send you, is by no means ambitious that your majesty should confound him with this worthy and learned prelate. The name of the orator is Boismont, and not Beaumont; nor has he any thing of the priest, except that he is *apte et idoine* * for the possession of benefices.

The emperor was to arrive, on the twenty-eighth, not at Paris but at Versailles. Had I the honour to meet him, which cannot be, for I go as seldom to Versailles as to Bruffels, I should take the liberty to recommend him, in your majesty's name, to the sacerdotal and monachal strong box; which advice I presume your majesty would not gainsay.

The excellent sermon which you have composed for Calvin, in the last letter with which you have honoured me, is superior to all the declamations of Bourdaloue. I should reply, if I dared, by another sermon, which no doubt would not equal yours, but which might give too much offence to the curiosity of the postmasters, between Paris and Berlin; and I recollect that the Evangelist has said—"Woe to him by whom the offence cometh"—from which,

* Is ready; has gone through all his degrees. T.
like

like Rabelais, I wish *curiously* to preserve myself. The thing which pleases me best, in this charming sermon, is that it proves your majesty to be very cheerful, consequently in very good health. You have no need to tell me you have **not** the vapours; your diverting and excellent letter is sufficient proof. But it is time to finish mine, which is by no means its equal.

I am, with the most tender and profound veneration, &c.

Postscript. I learn, as the post is departing, that the emperor yesterday arrived at Paris. He visited a few places in the city; and at five o'clock in the evening set off for Versailles; where operas, comedies, balls, parades, &c. &c. were preparing for his reception; and concerning which I believe he troubles himself little. It is said, all these pleasures, or rather these fatigues, will be of short continuance; and that he will depart on Friday, for Vienna. It is further said, he will only visit the royal family, and the ministers Maurepas and De Vergennes. If he come to negotiate peace, he will perform a good work, for we have great need of it, in the manner in which we make war. Our enemies fortunately make it no better than we do, and I continually recollect the remark of Fontenelle, who said—"In time of war, men talk of no-
" thing

“ thing but the balance of power, throughout
“ Europe ; though there is another balance at
“ least of equal efficacy, and equally proper for
“ the preservation of each power ; which is the
“ balance of blunders.”

May I venture to present a petition to your majesty, the granting of which will render you dear and respectable to all our young scholars, as you are to all those who are not scholars ? The student of fourteen, who has sung your praise in excellent Latin verse, is, as I have just been assured, in extreme indigence. He is absolutely ignorant, as are all those who interest themselves for him, that I have the honour to write to your majesty ; consequently you may refuse my trifling request wholly at your ease. But I dare believe that a very small donation, from your majesty to this youth, to encourage him in his studies, would be worthy of the great king who honours and protects letters, from one end of Europe to the other ; who encourages them in every class, and every age, and who is also celebrated by them, in every class, and every age.

Ten thousand pardons for all this prattling ! Fortunately for your majesty, the post warns me it is time to conclude.

LETTER CCXII.

From the King.

August 12, 1781.

I AM obliged to confess you are a universal genius. I long since knew you had made a great progress in the high sciences, and that the profane writings of Horace had not escaped your notice; but for the royal prophet, the favourite musician of Saul, the most famous psalm-singer of the Jews, I never suspected you had studied him enough to quote him. Therefore, to display my political erudition, I will apply to you the saying of a minister of Spain to his king, when the house of Braganza deprived him of Portugal—"Your monarchy, or your learning, is like a ditch; the more you dig the deeper it is." Every thing is within the sphere of your knowledge; from the dregs of the Hebrew to the king-prophet. Beware lest the Sorbonne should imitate you; they then would sing, in the church of Notre Dame—"O Lord, root out the English! Happy shall he be that taketh their children, and dasheth them against the stones."

" A nos chiens s'engraïsseront

*" De leur sang, qu'ils lècheront." **

In the pacific region which I inhabit, these lines would be thought worthy of American scalpers and cannibals; but, with respect to the doctors of the Sorbonne, they even collect as sublime what is every where else rejected. I therefore hope that, on some grand festival, held before the emperor, Joseph II. he will be regaled with this hymn.

The verses of your youth possess energy; his talent is superior to his age. Beware that his fate resemble not that of Pic de la Mirandole, and Baratier, who both died young, the victims of premature genius. My banker will supply you with some money for the rising poet. Some Latin purists have pretended they have detected gallicisms; but the age of the poet is a sufficient excuse. How much was I surprised to find myself one of the *dramatis personæ* in company with religion! We never before lived under the same roof. I well perceive we need but grow old, and experience will teach us nothing is im-

* " And make them dip their feet in blood

" Of those that hate my name;

" The tongues of dogs they shall be red,

" With licking of the same."

Sternbold and Hopkins.

possible :

possible: so that he who has the impertinence to live long will always find novelty.

Did I wish to make a collection of the novel-ties I have seen, they would fill as many volumes as the *Encyclopedie*. Here are a few specimens. I have seen Louis XIV. scarcely buried ere he was despised, and forgotten. I have seen two queens of France; Poisson and l'Ange*. I have seen fire and water unite, the Bourbons allied with the Habsbourgs. I have seen the Jesuits extirpated. I have seen philosophy draw truth out of her well. I have seen barbarians refuse to inter Voltaire. I have seen rebellious children mutiny against their papa, the pope, hustle, pillage, and degrade him. I have seen—a number of other things, concerning which I shall be silent. Should this sample please the public, the remainder will flow freely; and should you gentlemen, who break open letters, suppose you have discovered all I think, by reading these lines, I give you notice that you deceive yourselves. Or, had you even made the discovery, your memory would but be loaded with a few additional follies.

But you, my dear Anaxagoras, expect me to write epigrams when the symbols of winter cover

* The names of madame de Pompadour and the countess du Barré, mistresses to Louis XV. T.

my half bald head, when my blood is icy, my imagination equally cold, and at a time when I scarcely can drag the limbs of my former existence after me. Alas ! The roses of my youth are faded ; and, falling, have left nothing but the brambles of decay. It would be excellent to hear me, with a tremulous voice, declaiming a pointleſs epigram on Beaumont ; meriting as he does to be torn and ſcattered to the winds, by ſatyrs and bacchantæ. I write this letter in buſkins. I had put on the ſock to write the preceding.

*Ainſi, ſans chagrins, ſans noirceurs,
De la fin de mes jours poison lent et funeſte,
Je ſème, encore, de quelques fleurs,
Le peu de chemin qui me reſte *.*

Anacreon, Chaulieu, Horace, Virgil and Voltaire are my poetic evangelists. I abandon the wits of the old teſtament to Beaumont, to the doctors of the Sorbonne, and to blockheads ; they may make the mountains dance and ſkip if they pleaſe ; let them but leave Parnaffus ſtanding and I ſhall be ſatiſfied. Inſtead of *Notre Dame*, and *Saint Geneviève*, I have the nine ſiſters and Sappho ; and, in lieu of Saint Denis, Apollo, who does not carry his head under his

* Theſe verſes are tranſlated, in a note to letter CLXI. T.
arm.

arm *. You will allow that an honest man has no cause of complaint, in such company.

Let me add, we do not suffer indignation here, from your kind of gluttony. We celebrate our festivals with figs and nectarines, and drink the juice of the Muscadine grape, and perform all this without necromancer, or necromancy. You ought to resolve to partake of our love-feasts, for of these your faith renders you worthy; and the brethren would receive you with open arms. But what talk I? You refer me to the valley of Jehosaphat, and I am afraid we both shall make our exit without ever meeting. If you wish for a pair of buskins, by the only maker, a pair you shall have; for every thing in this world is folly, mirth excepted.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER CCXIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, September 10, 1781.

YOUR majesty appears so stupified, and as I may say so scandalised, by my royal pro-

* One of the miracles related of Saint Denis.

phetic and Hebrew erudition, that I am almost tempted to blush at it myself, and to ask pardon of the royal philosopher. But the royal philosopher will forgive me for remembering all this rubbish, when he shall learn that I had the misfortune to be educated by bigots, who obliged me to bawl many a psalm, and that Heaven endowed me with such a memory as would not suffer them to be forgotten, during a course of fifty years. I however console myself, by the use I make of them, in singing your majesty's praise.

I have received the gratuity which your majesty has been pleased to grant the youth, whom I have not yet been able to acquaint with your favours, because there is a month's vacation now, at our colleges, and he is gone I know not whither to spend his holidays, with his poor and obscure relations, who live, at I know not what village, a hundred leagues from Paris. But I have remitted the sum entire to his professor, who will give it him, on his return. I have informed the whole university of the act of your majesty, to aid and encourage this poor youth in his studies, and gratitude has been generally incited; so that I am certain your majesty's praise will be sung, in every college, in Latin and Greek, perhaps in Hebrew, and even in French;

French; though French is the language with which our pedants are the least acquainted.

Your majesty has reasoned excellently against Solomon, who pretends there is nothing new under the sun. I join with you, sire, to prove his falsehood; and, without going further than the present year, I could shew the monarch, with seven hundred concubines, more than one novelty of which he never dreamed. But I must imitate your majesty, and be silent. I wish however to know what are your thoughts, on the letter which Cæsar Joseph II. is said to have written, to his most holy father, pope Pius VI. to request, in all humility, he would, once for all, settle the limits of the two powers, to the end that they might no more be mentioned. This treatment of his holiness, by his Imperial majesty, seems like bringing the cat to trial. I am in pain for the poor cat; for Joseph does not seem to strike with a palsied arm, nor appear willing to be paid with a joke.

Heaven be praised, your majesty has no need to propose like cases of conscience to an old priest. Mount Parnassus, as you have well said, is both your holy see, and your Sorbonne; and Horace, Virgil, and Voltaire are your casuists. May you long maintain this inestimable cheerfulness, so necessary to your own preservation, and

consequently to the happiness of Europe! While reading the letters you do me the honour to write to me, I almost become merry myself; although, at other times, I am little inclined to mirth. But it is sufficient consolation to me that your majesty is in good health. May you long live to enjoy your glory; and may you long continue to treat me with like kindness!

A man of letters of my acquaintance, well informed, worthy, and destitute of fortune, is desirous of attaching himself to your majesty either as a member of your academy or in any other office. He does not ask any considerable salary, and might be useful from the variety of his knowledge. His name is Dubois. Being at Berlin in the year 1778, he had the honour to present, by the hands of the printer to the court, Decker, an estimable work, to your majesty, written by him, the title of which is *Essai sur l'Histoire Littéraire de Pologne**; and your majesty did him the honour to return him a favourable answer. He lived six years at Warsaw, where he was professor of history and civil law, which situation his health obliged him to quit. He is well-read in French literature, military antiquities, physics, and natural history; he understands the German, Italian, and Polish languages; and

* *Essay on the Literary History of Poland.*

has

has sent various observations to the academy of Berlin, which are inserted in its memoirs. He is now printing, at Paris, a translation of a work, by M. Achard, on precious stones. He is in correspondence with several members of the academy of Berlin; and the death of M. Francheville, and the retreat of M. Beguelin, might facilitate his admission into that society, where he would not be misplaced. Perhaps indeed your majesty might rather choose to employ him in your cabinet, your chancery, or as secretary to some embassy. I believe him, from the variety of his knowledge, to be equally capable of each of these pursuits. Should the services of this man of letters suit your majesty, he waits your commands, and your will.

I am, with the most tender gratitude and veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CCXIV.

From the King.

September 27, 1781.

ONE of the ignorant, like me, receives edification from the lessons sent him by one of the
the

the learned of the first class; and some authors appear to me less absurd, when passages are cited from their works, than when the works themselves are read. Malice quotes and disfigures the original, so as to render the most orthodox passages heretical. But the philosopher, when he quotes, imparts an air of good sense to the most trivial thoughts. I therefore congratulate those, of whom you speak, that their vile madrigals have been inserted in your writings. Nor am I the less persuaded that Virgil, Horace, and Voltaire stand higher in your judgment than such inventors of hyperbole, and that you never will place them beside Newton or Descartes. If I am too hasty in my conclusions, I stand corrected.

It were to be wished that Philosophy and Reason had totally routed Superstition and Fanaticism, for they seem to me to take a new turn; and, if the monstrous edifice of Error be overthrown, it must be by the poverty of empires, which will give place to more refined and more perfect systems of finance. I know that prince Kaunitz, some years since, was labouring to trace out a line of demarcation, and to prescribe bounds to the spiritual power of Christ's vicars,

* The king refers to the quotation from the Psalms, in the last letter but one of D'Alembert. T.

by which the temporal authority of his sovereign might profit. Apparently, to put this project in immediate execution, Cæsar Joseph is beginning a negotiation with the holy see. The throne of St. Peter has been erected on the ideal credit of the bank of the Vatican; but letters of exchange, payable in the next world, are protested, and credit falls. Though these symptoms do not announce a general bankruptcy, they are insensibly leading the public that road. The number of monks is diminishing, in many places; the organs of superstition are palsy-struck, and the porter of Paradise will be reduced to the mere bishop of Rome.

Those happy days we never shall see; however, according to the direction of Maupertuis, I heat my imagination, and behold such excellent things with the mind's eye, blessing the fortunate age which shall enjoy an advantage which, to ours, has been denied.

But why are you astonished at my cheerfulness; or that I clap my hands in ecstasy, at such flattering predictions as imagination supplies? Recollect that tranquillity of mind, and cheerfulness, are the only kind of happiness of which we can partake. Happiness must be sought in ourselves, and not in exterior things, which seduce by false appearances. Agreeable dreams
console

console me for the afflictions of which melancholy truths are productive. Act in the same manner, my dear D'Alembert; profit by momentary existence, to depict all things in gay colours; let imagination add such embellishments as may render this world delightful, and your own existence supportable; and do not forget that life is too short to deserve the trouble of grieving.

I do not recollect the Mr. Dubois of whom you speak. Perhaps I may be able to find some situation for him here; but it is necessary to see him, and still more necessary to inquire into his morals and conduct, which you can easily do. Be kind enough not to press me for an answer, till the return of your letter. I wish you health and mirth, assuring you, on my part, of the sincere pleasure I take in every thing which relates to you.

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

LETTER CCXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, October 26, 1781.

I BEGIN by laying at your majesty's feet the gratitude of the young student, whom you have been pleased to honour with your favours. The expression of this gratitude you will find, in the letter which the youth has himself the honour to write to your majesty, and which he sent to me two days since, on his return from holiday-making. His poor relations, his tutors, and the university of Paris, of which he is a pupil, all partake of the sentiments with which this youth is penetrated, by your majesty's bounty; and with him repeat, after Horace, the wish he has made, that your majesty may remain on earth as long as possible, before you shall on Olympus rejoin Augustus, and other princes who protected letters; and that you long may find greater satisfaction in the title of father than in that of monarch.

I congratulate philosophy by anticipation, in concert with your majesty, for the luminous days that are to succeed, perhaps when I shall be no more, yet the morning of which I do not despair
but

but that your majesty and I may see ; so unmercifully does it seem to me that Cæsar flogs the horses, or the asses, that draw the pontifical machine, which begins to be so disjointed as to threaten approaching ruin. Report says the holy see begins to be disturbed, and to perceive it is a serious affair. Once again, it is to your majesty, heretio as you are, that Germany and other nations will be indebted for this favour, by the excellent example you have afforded, to catholic princes and others, of toleration, and likewise of your contempt for all human superstitions.

A circumstance of still greater worth to Germany, and Europe, is the philosophic and charming gaiety with which your majesty thinks, writes, and speaks ; because such gaiety announces a strong existing principle of life ; and because all thinking beings, in this sublunary world, I had almost said all beings that breathe, at least in Europe, have need of your preservation. For my part, whose frail and paltry existence is unfortunately not necessary to any one, I imitate, as much as I can, the excellent example of your majesty ; I laugh at all the follies, great and small, that are said and done on this globe, and find my health the better for such conduct.

I am sufficiently acquainted with M. Dubois, and have been so long enough, to assure your
I majesty

majesty that he is a well-informed man of letters, conversant in ancient and modern history, with some knowledge of the laws of nations, and one who has visited various countries of Europe. I have reason to believe he is a man whose morals and conduct are good, and that your majesty will find cause of satisfaction in the different offices in which you shall find him employment. He was professor of history and the laws of nations at Warsaw, which place his health obliged him to leave; though not without the most advantageous and most authentic attestations, which I have seen and read, of his capacity, and good behaviour. Messieurs Bitaubé and Thiebault, who are acquainted with him, as likewise is M. Decker the printer, and various other persons, can bear testimony of his conduct to your majesty, should you think proper to interrogate them on the subject. M. Bernouilli makes long and honourable mention of him, in that volume of his travels in which he speaks of Poland. Should your majesty, after these various references, think that you may safely afford employment to M. Dubois, I entreat you to send me your commands, relative to his departure and his journey.

Your majesty is, no doubt, by this informed
that

that our queen was delivered of a prince, on the twenty-second of this month.

I am, with the most profound respect, and the most lively gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R CCXVI.

From the King.

November 10, 1781.

I HAVE been astonished at the style of your young scholar, and think he will make his fortune in France, if he should, in time, bring his talent for flattery to perfection, the talent most necessary for success at court. Cæsar accepted praise from Cicero, and various others; Augustus drank deep draughts of it from Virgil, Ovid, and Horace; Leo X. preferred parasites to the apostles; Louis XIV. welcomed, with avidity, the flattery which his academy distributed, and his love for the opera originated in the praises contained in the prologues; Alexander, in his expedition against Porus, being overcome with fatigue, exclaimed — “ Oh ! Athenians, you know not what I endure, to gain your applause ! ”

Not being formed to rank with any of these
demi-

demi-gods, I imagine I hear an insect reading the panegyric of another insect; and that this is the just estimate of the praises we bestow on each other. It is our duty to be just, and beneficent; and we may deserve approbation; but to praise wretched earth-worms, that exist but for a moment, and then eternally disappear, is folly. Let us have the fortitude to be satisfied with our destiny, and not suffer a heated imagination, inflated by hyperbole, to make giants of pigmies.

I forget myself: it had escaped my memory that I was writing to a philosopher, who can read me lessons on modesty and prudence, were they necessary.

I perceive you suppose you shall soon walk over the ruins of superstition; but I cannot imagine its destruction so near. Should the apostolic Joseph humble the whore of Babylon, according to the elegant style of Jurieu, do not imagine that philosophy has any concern in the business, but consider this as a step in advance to seizing on Ferrara from the holy father. The clergy are relieved from their dependence on Rome, that they may not sound the alarm while Cæsar shall strip his holiness. The bishop of Vienna will be obliged to sing *Te Deum*, when his spiritual chief shall be driven from Ferrara. The ambition and politics of monarchs will

humble the holy see, in whatever relates to their interests; but the stupidity, the credulity, and the fanaticism of the vulgar, will still, for many ages, support the extravagance of received fables. Recollect how many centuries Paganism was predominant, and thence conclude that the number of philosophers will never be superior to that of the imbecile and the ignorant; and that scarcely one philosopher, in any age, will be discovered among a hundred thousand inhabitants of this earth. To this add, if you please, the power of general education, the business of which is to fill the brain of tender youth with prejudice and error; which, being thus sucked in with the mother's milk, make deep impressions for the remainder of life.

But it is possible, and probable, that the number of Cenobites, who are the organs and trumpets of fanaticism, will be diminished, and the power of bishops reduced; who, thus losing the advantages which result from false zeal, will become tolerant, not having any thing to gain by persecution. Thus far am I led by my calculations on probabilities; but to suppose that men will be without error, and all become philosophers, is impossible; for reasons which I have before alleged. But if, by the destruction of bigotry, they may be rendered tolerant, that is
all

all that can be effected. Leave we therefore the world to run round as it pleases, and let us be satisfied with the power of thinking freely.

It depends on you to send me M. Dubois. Your testimony is sufficient, and in you I confide. When I have conversed with him, I shall frankly tell you my opinion. I am well convinced however that he neither could form his head nor his heart in Poland.

I congratulate you on the birth of the Dauphin, and wish he may possess the prudence of Marcus Aurelius, the humanity of Cæsar, the goodness of Titus, and the understanding of Julian; for nothing less than imperial qualities must be wished to a French monarch.

For your own part, I wish you health and content, for of every thing else you are in possession; nor can I desire any increase of the gifts of nature for you, with which you have so long been enriched.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXVII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E.

Paris, December 14, 1781.

AN indisposition rather painful, which made me fear a return of my nephritic complaints, and from which I was but yesterday relieved, has for a week prevented me from writing to your majesty; nor is this the least evil which has been done me, by this indisposition. I now begin by answering the last of the two letters with which your majesty has honoured me, within a short time of each other. Accustomed though I am, sire, to the infinite bounties of every kind which your majesty for thirty years has heaped upon me, they continually penetrate me with increasing gratitude, and I am infinitely affected by the new mark which you have given me of this, in admitting M. Selis one of the members of the illustrious academy which your majesty protects, in so effectual and splendid a manner. Though your majesty has been kind enough to tell me you would, on this occasion, pay respect to my recommendation of M. Selis, I dare assure your majesty he is worthy of the favour by his works, as your majesty may convince

vince yourself, and by his talents for the education of youth confided to his care, who by him will be taught the sound principles of literature, and morals. He has charged me to lay at your feet the just sentiments he feels for your person, with which sentiments he will inspire his pupils, and which you will find expressed in the letter he has the honour to write to your majesty. He intends to honour the choice you have made of him, by sending some dissertations to the academy, on subjects interesting to literature; and by endeavouring to render them worthy of insertion, in the memoirs of that learned body.

Your majesty cannot imagine the gratitude, and emulation, you have excited in the university of Paris, by the bounty with which you have deigned to notice the master and the disciple. Thus students, as well as sciences and literature, will be indebted to you for their progress in France, as they are in Prussia.

Your majesty expresses yourself with the truest, and at the same time the most amiable, philosophy, concerning the praises bestowed on you by the young student. But such philosophy, worthy as it is of the great man who can so justly appreciate all things, will not prevent Philosophy herself from affirming—*The boy has said the*

truth—or from applauding the justice he has rendered your majesty.

I, like you, do not think it is the love of philosophy which has inspired the Cæsar Joseph with so many projects against monks, priests, and the court of Rome. I imagine these projects do but conceal interests of greater magnitude, which will soon burst forth ; and, notwithstanding my disorder, and my age of sixty-four, I do not despair but that I shall one day behold the emperor truly king of the Romans ; and the successor of Saint Peter reduced to be no more than bishop of Rome.

Unfortunately, sire, for the progress of reason, priests still preserve, in kingdoms not under the Austrian power, an influence which must ever be prejudicial to knowledge. Would your majesty believe that the archbishop of Paris, who by way of parenthesis is now dying with the dropsy, has demanded that the word *priests*, in new plays, should not be pronounced, and that he has obtained his request ? The conscience of these people accuses them, and they think, when evil is said of priests, of any religion, they themselves are understood. They resemble the drunken footman, in the comedy, who, hearing the word rascal pronounced, with great simplicity,

city, says—"Rascal! This man knows me I find."—The following line has been retrenched from a new piece, the plot of which relates to the fourteenth century, during the times of the emperor Louis of Bavaria and John XXII.

*Le sacerdote altier lutte contre l'empire.**

Yet this line only relates a fact, which unfortunately was but too true, of that deplorable æra. Thus, though our young, sage, and virtuous monarch place no confidence in priests, though acquainted with all the evil of which they are capable, his authority is unworthily abused to conceal from the people, if possible, that priests have long been the greatest enemies of kings, and that they are so still; for, when they say the royal authority originates in God, it is because they imagine themselves the representatives of God; and thus use every endeavour to shackle the most legitimate authority, when it shall counteract their views.

I hear that, six months ago, a wretched woman was burnt, for the heresy of quietism †, in Spain.

* The proud priesthood wrestles with the empire.

† The quietists were the followers of Molinos, a Spanish priest. Their opinions were that it was first necessary to pass through the purgative life, or the obedience inspired by the fear of hell. The soul after this was finally to obtain perfect

Spain. How horrid, yet how stupid, is such an act ! But Spain crouches under the most contemptible ignorance. Of this the late ill success of the nation, before Gibraltar, is a melancholy instance.

I read the answer of your majesty to M. Du-bois, such as you were pleased to write. He is penetrated with gratitude by this answer ; but, though he feel your majesty cannot promise to employ him without having first put him to the proof, the fear that he should not after trial prove suitable to your majesty, and the situation in which such a misfortune would leave him, will not allow him to be at the expence of the journey, under this uncertainty. He likewise perfectly feels that your majesty cannot be at such an expence, without knowing of what use he may be ; he therefore, with the utmost regret, renounces the honour which he for a moment flattered himself he should enjoy.

I am, sire, this year, as I have been every other, with the most tender veneration, &c.

rest, and only contemplate its God ; but neither act, think, nor wish more. It was but the receptacle of divine grace, which impelled it as it pleased and how it pleased. T.

L E T.

LETTER CCXVIII.

From the King.

January 23, 1782.

I RECEIVED your letter on the seventh of January, and the multiplicity of affairs I had to transact obliged me to defer an answer till now, when I am returned to my philosophic asylum. Do not imagine that the Christmas carousals have in the least disturbed me. These pleasures are no longer of any worth at my time of life, when the man is dead to the world, when the ice of age has extinguished the fire of youth, and when vegetation succeeds to active life. In such a state of apathy, it is difficult to imagine that an old man can, at a distance, renovate an ardour for the study of the belles lettres; and the less so because the genius of the French nation is the best encouragement to this study. Palm-trees shoot up, in France, as on the banks of the Ganges; but, with us, they are hot-house plants.

A young scholar may no doubt be indulged in the use of hyperbole, without which praise could not exist. I have sometimes employed it myself; and, for that very reason, hold it in

very little estimation. In my youth, I wrote a panegyric on a shoe-maker, whom I took occasion to raise to a level with that emperor whom Pliny so magnificently celebrates. The imagination indulges itself in such sportive fallies, and so easily rises to the superlative that the height of praise sometimes becomes the height of ridicule.

But let us leave panegyric, and speak of the projects of the Cæsar Joseph. You have heard no doubt that poor Braschi, to avert the storm with which the holy see is threatened, had determined to repair to Vienna, that he might soften Cæsar, and support, over his Teutonic and Hungarian flock, that plenitude of power which had been confided to him by the holy Peter. To this Joseph answered that his holiness might come to Vienna, if he pleased; but that he should nevertheless put his project into execution. Whether the tiara will humble itself before the Imperial crown, or not, is still to be known. To avenge the emperors, Frederic II. and Henry, it is necessary the pope should be received, at Vienna, as the emperor formerly was at Canosse. Then would the honour of the throne, and that of the laity, be redeemed from episcopal despotism. Yet the voice of compassion, which speaks in favour of the unfortunate;

is

is heard in my heart, which tells me it was Hildebrand who should have been punished, and not a poor pontiff who, far from doing ill, is clearing the Pontine marshes. Insolence excites disgust, weakness pity. None but the cowardly revenge themselves on the vanquished; and of the number of these I am not. I leave the whore of Babylon to seat herself quietly on her seven hills; provided she abandon her dogmatical decisions, and preach charity, I should be as little her enemy as that of the Dalai Lama, who sits in state at Thibet.

I know not whether the quietists be burnt, at Madrid; or whether mourning be worn at Lisbon, because the host has been stolen; but I hear, and I congratulate you on the event, the archbishop of Paris is dead. This Beaumont was not of so much worth as the advocate, Elias de Beaumont. The bishop was a bear, led in a string by an ex-jesuit; who invented for him, and dictated, all the sacerdotal absurdities which he put in act. The bigot ought to praise Heaven to find the word priest still in use; it would be much worse for him, were it to be heard no more. But this were a supposition that man might hereafter become reasonable; which to me appears impossible, considering the world's propensity.

You

You must not wonder I wished to speak to M. Dubois, previous to entering into an agreement. You cannot imagine what caravans of literary insects arrive here, of which it is difficult to get rid; and especially because the vermin swarm most in Poland. For this reason, the sieur Dubois having resided in that kingdom into which men of merit seldom find their way, unfavourable prejudices have been conceived, which could only be removed by proving their falsehood from experience.

I have seen most of our academicians. Some of them talk to me of a new planet; others of another comet; and I am waiting, till they shall decide its fate, that I may pay it all due honours. M. de la Grange calculates, calculates, and calculates, curves as many as you please. M. Formey writes panegyrics. Achard makes experiments on phlogiston. Weguelin is studying which way the thirty years war might have been sooner terminated; and I am doing nothing, but praying for your preservation, cursing your nephritic malady, and wishing for the re-establishment of peace in Europe.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T-

LETTER CCXIX.

From the King.

February 24, 1782.

GOOD heavens, my dear Anaxagoras, what a bundle of philosophy have you sent me! The first volume contains the refutation of absurd systems, which are self destructive, and which do not deserve such multitudes of words to reduce them to dust. The style is too declamatory, and unsuitable to philosophic subjects; which whoever would treat on ought to be methodical, and to have much logic, and perspicacity.

But, mercy on me! What shall I say to the second volume? What! Are there people mad enough to raise systems in the eighteenth century, and create a world according to their whims, without having first examined whether the world be not eternal, and whether that doctrine be not much more probable than to give it a beginning? What a chaos is this system! An endeavour to raise the vortices of Descartes from the dead, and very awkwardly mix them up with the Newtonian philosophy. If there be any vacancy in the mad-houses of Paris,

send

send your philosopher there as soon as possible ; for there he will be seated on his throne :

The man who would tilt with Newton must be armed at all points, and firmly seated in his saddle ; but your French hero would by the most trifling shock be unhorsed, and lie prostrate in the dust. Take my advice ; let us confide in experiment ; let reason be the superintendent of our philosophic studies, and let not imagination extend beyond the sphere of poetry.

The work has put me in an ill humour, and I have wished to unburthen my griefs in your bosom ; that, however little, the load might be lightened. I before had the gout, the rheumatism, a rash, and the fever ; and the absurdities you have sent me have almost put an end to my existence. Of all diseases that of reasoning ill is the most mortal, when it attacks a brain that revolts at nonsense. For the love of God, if your French writers bring forth such abortions, do not afflict me with them ! Let me depart in peace, from this world, without disgusting me by the dull absurdities of authors, who suppose themselves philosophers and who are only visionaries, enamoured of their own lunatic illusions.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T.

LETTER CCXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, March 1, 1782.

I HAVE had many apprehensions, well or ill founded, but continually great, concerning your health, since the last letter I received from your majesty. My German correspondents have informed me it was not good, and that it has at least suffered some alteration, during the severe winter which is said to have visited the north. Fortunately the baron von Goltz has calmed my fears, and has assured me your majesty is as well as can be wished. I have therefore only to testify my satisfaction and joy. This consolation rewards me for the contrarieties to which my poor machine is subjected, and which even begin to make me believe it will perhaps soon be necessary to pack up, and begone; but health, and life itself, to me are nothing, while I have no fears for those of your majesty.

Your bounty to the young student, whom I took the liberty to recommend, has increased the emulation and ardour which this interesting youth had before shewn. He has, for five months, continually been at the head of his class,

class, and will use every effort to prove himself worthy of the favours which your majesty has been pleased to confer on his rising talents.

What your majesty has done me the honour to write, relative to the dispute between Cæsar and the most holy father, is full of reason, humanity, and justice. The poor priest, who now drains the Pontine marshes, is certainly no participator in the follies of Gregory VII. Innocent IV. and a multitude of his predecessors. But almighty justice has made all mankind accountable for the sins of an individual; and imperial justice will render one accountable for the sins of many. We have here read the monkish remonstrances of the priest, who is elector of Treves, and the very military answer of Cæsar Joseph. I know not whether I be or be not mistaken, but I do not think Cæsar will stop here. These preliminaries seem to be what is called skirmishing before battle. Unfortunately, for holy Peter, there is great odds in the match. All the bishops of the provinces of Cæsar, whether from policy or pleasure at no longer being dependent on Rome, are apparently very submissive to the imperial mandates. They would be every where the same, had monarchs the wit to say—*Such is my will*—to animals that are exceedingly restive when entreated, but very gentle
when

when commanded. The holy father would console himself for his Germanic disasters, with the submission of an Italian, the fidelity of a Spaniard, and the catholicity of a Frenchman; for we shall not very suddenly cease to have the honour to be exceedingly catholic; nor will the Italians cease to be exceedingly submissive, or the Spaniards to be equally faithful.

The Spaniards however, in despite of their inquisition, have lately taken Port Mahon. In my opinion they are more fortunate than sage; and the English are somewhat more inept than they were in the times of Marlborough, and Pitt. People begin to believe that these Spaniards, notwithstanding their successive blunders at the camp of St. Roch, will at last take Gibraltar; which place, it must be owned, faces them with a grin somewhat more horrible than that of Port Mahon. The camp at St. Roch appears to me to be as little effectual as the armed neutrality, the serious efforts of which have hitherto been in vain expected to repress English insolence. It would do better still could it bring the English to determine on peace, which they have as much need of as we have. But I fear, ere this, peace is not so near as it were to be wished.

Our politicians of the Thuilleries, who seldom know what they say, speak of a threatened inva-

sion of the provinces of the venerable sultan, on the part of two of your neighbours. It would be pleasant, should Cæsar at once undertake to expel both the pope and the great turk. This to me would be a subject of much indifference, provided the repose of your majesty remain undisturbed, for I wish you nothing but repose. Who can affirm you have any need of renown?

The planet, or comet, which has long been seen in the heavens, perhaps forebodes great political events. Unfortunately there is no certainty that it is a comet; without which, as your majesty well knows, it would not have the honour to forebode so much even as rain, or fair weather. It is vehemently suspected to be a poor planet, the smallness and distance of which have hitherto kept it in obscurity. More time is yet necessary for astronomers to ascertain its rank, and, according to the phrase, allot it a house.

In the mean time, sire, take care of yourself, and deign to continue your bounty toward me, and to receive the homage of that profound respect with which I shall be, to the end of life, &c.

L E T.

LETTER CCXXI.

From the King.

March 17, 1782..

YOUR information, concerning my state of health, was more true than you seem to suppose. I have had a severe fit of the gout in my right hand and foot; and, as good results from evil, my inability to use my right hand has made me have recourse to my left, with which I have learned to write legibly. This employment, and patience, are all the benefits I have derived from my last illness. I recal to mind the sage precepts of the Portico; though I did not exclaim, in the moment of pain, like Posidonius—"Oh Gout! Do what thou wilt, I never will confess that thou art an evil." I am satisfied with supporting pain without complaining, or denying its existence.

I am sorry to hear you have suffered by the gravel, while I have been confined by the gout. Of this we must accuse age. Time, which has destroyed the temple of Jupiter at the Capitol, and left no vestige of the tower of Babel, whose head, as you know, was in the clouds; time, I say, will much more easily debilitate, and fret

Y 2

away,

away, springs so fragile as are those which give motion to the human body. Yet does the clay, of which we are manufactured, longer resist destruction than iron itself, notwithstanding its hardness. You must know I inquired how long clocks, which are placed in church steeples, remain before they are worn out, and was told, to my great astonishment, they must be entirely renewed once in twenty years. Rust eats the parts, and occasions the springs to break, by which motion is stopped; for this reason we two, who have been impertinent enough to live longer than the duration of three clocks of iron, ought not to think it strange that the machine is out of order, and that its infirmities preface approaching dissolution.

All things inform us of the reign of mutability, over the globe. Rome, imperious and apostolic Rome, is sinking under her rebellious children; who refuse obedience, uncloister the *culati*, appropriate their goods and chattels to themselves, and insolently shake off the yoke of purgatory. Christ's earthly vicar is going to Vienna, to make honourable amends at the foot of the Imperial throne; and you every where hear heretics exclaiming—"Rightly did we say that the whore of Babylon was not infallible; were
" Braschi so he would not be guilty of the folly
" of

“ of so ineffectual and so ill-timed a step.” For my part, heretic though I be, I pity the Abbé of the south, as the prince de Ligne calls him, seeing him thus in his present desolate situation ; he falls the victim of the audacious effrontery of his predecessors.

The abbé Raynal suffers a similar fate. He is, at present, in one of the fearful dungeons of the Bastille ; after having, scarcely six months ago, been seated beside the Cæsar Joseph, and dining in company with the monarch at Spa. I thought that to have conversed, once during life, with a *caput orbis*, was a sufficient safeguard against opprobrium. But it seems that, in this perverse age, there is no place of refuge for the ignoble against the caprice of fortune. Oh, Solomon ! Wert thou to revisit earth, thou wouldst of need confess many new things have happened, in our days, which thou didst neither see nor foresee, and which will be productive of many others.

With reason do I abandon the future to vague chance ; all I require, from our good mother Nature, is the preservation of the sage Anaxagoras ; and to their evil destiny I commit Braschi, Raynal, the successors of Kouli-Kan, the sons of Loyola, the capuchins, and the English.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXII. '

From the King.

March 23, 1782.

NO, my dear Anaxagoras, my philosophic zeal did not vent itself against you, who are a true sage, but against those blockheads who, assuming the specious title of philosophers, take upon themselves to create a world according to their whims, and at the conclusion too of the eighteenth century. I had taken it for granted, from the progress of good sense, that science would at least have undeceived those who scrutinise nature, relative to former absurd opinions, on the origin which folly has attributed to the world. But our author haughtily enters the lists, and overturns every system he attacks, especially that of Buffon. Whenever I find my gentleman erecting his own hypothesis, by a capricious and incompatible mixture of that of Descartes and that of Newton, and perceive him creating and arranging the universe by his almighty word, instead of admiring this potent creator, I consign him to the hospital for lunatics.

Whoever has well examined the subject must allow that, if we pay respect to the fundamental
axioms

axioms of reason, we cannot of necessity but admit the eternity of the earth. The system of creation is encumbered at every step by absurdities; the *ex nihilo nihil est*, which all antiquity respected, must be denied; we must persuade ourselves that an incorporeal being, though of such we can form no idea, has produced, and acted upon, without coming into contact with, matter; two contradictory opinions must be associated; the one that God is good, and perfect, and the other that he has been pleased to create a detestable world. The philosopher of Bedlam despises such trifling difficulties; he daringly bounds over the abyss of incomprehensibility; but the rays of truth melt his artificial wings, and he, like Icarus, is plunged into an ocean of contradictions, in which the little good sense that was left him is drowned. Forgive me this rather too poetical a comparison, which is a little in the style of Balzac; but you will read it with indulgence, when you reflect that, full of the declamations of the Parisian creator, and with my imagination heated by his style, some trifling imitation has escaped me in this letter.

All here is tranquillity; we create nothing, but satisfy ourselves with enjoying that which is created; and, while the emperor is wrangling with the pope, and you with the English, I, like

Diogenes, roll my tub, that I may not be singular in indolence.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXIII.

From the King,

April 26, 1782,

NO, my dear Anaxagoras, you have not entered into the spirit of my letter. God forbid that I should be angry with you, for having sent me this new system of philosophy. A sage, like you, is in no wise concerned in what enflamed my zeal. I have been in a passion with the author only. I cannot pardon him for having, at the end of the eighteenth century, attempted to depart from experiment, and wander in the labyrinth of chimera, which his imagination had conjured up. What will become of Philosophy, if we leave the sage path which has been traced out for her, and should we deprive her of the staff of analogy, and of that of experiment, by which to find her road? Should the book of this madman become fashionable, we should immediately have a number of young lunatics, who would but retail their paradoxes, that they might

might gain readers. Philosophy would, as formerly in Athens, fall into the hands of sophists; and to the most evident truths an obscure jargon would be substituted, and metaphysical and tortured phrases, by which France would again be plunged in ignorance.

I have an affection for the age in which I was born, and I abhor whatever threatens, once more, to hurry its successors into barbarism. When ambitious monks persecute philosophers, and rise in opposition to truths that have been best demonstrated by the apostles of reason, they do not meet my approbation. Yet I perceive they act according to principles of interest, by which they are incited to lord it over mankind. But when pretended philosophers themselves sap the foundation of the most acknowledged truths, when they degrade philosophy as much as they are able, and when they conjure up the errors of our ancestors, these things indeed are unpardonable. This was what stirred up my bile; and whoever delight to see mankind enlightened will, when they read this book, feel like sensations of indignation rise against its author.

You tell me of another book, which you have had the goodness to send me, but which I have not yet received. I request you would thank the persons who have been pleased to present it

to me. The reputation of the college of Mazarin has long been established. The Jesuits had able professors. Rhetoric was treated in a superior manner at Port-Royal. Pascal, Racine, Arnaud and Nicole were people of great merit, and pupils of that school. I could wish, for the consolation of my old age, I might see some plants sprout up, such as should supply those by whom the last century was honoured. Great men seem to die childless; I could wish there were a race of superior souls, whose descendants might incessantly fill up the vacant places.

But what matters it to me? I shall soon be gone, I have enjoyed the pure ore of the age of Louis XIV. and I thank Heaven for having sent me into the world at such a time. That we may comfort ourselves respecting the future, it is necessary to say—*when I am gone another deluge*. The world is a theatre of perpetual vicissitude, the scene of which is eternally changing. Here arts, sciences, and empires rise; and there barbarism succeeds to learning, and to the potentates whose thrones are trampled in the dust.

You French folks are not idle. You are sapping the foundations of the British throne, with tolerable success. The English nation, said to be so profound, has had superficial ministers, who have stript it of its superfluous wealth,
which

which it turned to abuse, and occasioned it to lose possessions which were but its burthen. They have bravely laboured for its abasement, intending, no doubt, to temper the excess to which it carried its haughtiness, and the disdain in which it had held the rest of Europe. A hundred years hence, he, among our contemporaries, who should rise from the dead, would no longer know our continent. In the mean time, I wish you health, prosperity, and content.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, May 3, 1782.

I RECEIVED, almost at the same time, the two letters your majesty was pleased to write to me, in answer to two letters which I had the honour to address to your majesty. By the first of the answers your majesty has deigned to send, I perceive you have this winter been attacked, as you have been almost every preceding winter, by that accursed gout which, while it

made you suffer with the patience of Epictetus; did not prevent you from being as merry as Democritus; yet without having indulged in the stoic and absurd pride of not regarding gout as an evil. I lately read the morals of Epictetus, which are too gigantic for nature, and formed for imaginary men*. Of this fine display, which is so ill adapted to our feeble nature, I say as our good La Fontaine, convert though he was to the vicar of his parish, said of the epistles of St. Paul, to his confessor—"Your
" Saint Paul is no man for me."

The philosophy of your majesty is more true, because it is more suitable to human nature, and more worthy of the real sage; who sees evil and good such as they are, who enjoys the latter, and endures the former, without self-praise, or murmuring at his fate. I profit according to the best of my abilities by the lessons, and especially by the example, of your majesty; and, when my disease makes me recollect pain is no joke, again and again read the letters of the philosophic king, in which I find ease and consolation. His holiness then is at length at Vienna, administering the sacrament to Cæsar,

* Let not the young reader take this for granted. T.
who

who laughs at him, and who will send him back as wise as he came. He has had no other satisfaction than that of suffering the capuchins, and pretty women, to kiss his mule, and of bestowing plenty of benedictions on the mob. Would that Gregory VII. and the emperor Henry IV. were spectators of the sight; would they saw the progress which reason has made, during a period of seven hundred years. That the period is long I grant; still however reason has been progressive; like the hour hand of a watch, without any sensible motion, it has continually advanced and now bids fair to complete its revolution. Let the holy Roman-apostolic and catholic church beware of the conclusion of these events; I know not whether the successor of Saint Peter have assumed to himself the title of the Abbé of the South, during his travels, but, in my opinion, he has made this excellent journey to go in search, according to the proverb, of noon at two o'clock*.

Your majesty has not been informed of the exact truth, relative to the abbé Raynal; he has indeed been condemned by our lords of the

* There is a play upon the word *midi*, which signifies both noon and the south, which cannot be translated. The French proverb is however preserved, because the spirit of a proverb but seldom *totally* evaporates in translation. T.

parliament, more ignorant than the Sorbonne; and more intolerant than the capuchins; but, anticipating the dreadful sentence, the abbé Raynal took refuge beyond the confines of France. He is neither in the prisons of the Chatelet nor the Bastille; but in safety at Bruffels, or elsewhere; for he is said at present to be travelling through Germany, and that he has even been exceedingly well received by a venerable prelate, the elector of Mentz. I imagine he will not, during his journey, forget to visit the philosophic monarch, who better deserves visiting than all the electors, and even all the Cæsars. Nor do I doubt but your majesty will console him, for all the persecutions he has endured, from fanaticism. The fate of our new planet, or comet, is still undecided, and his *house* is difficult of discovery. We begin to believe however that a planet he will remain, at twice the distance of Saturn from the sun, and performing his revolution in eighty-two years. Time will tell us more, but this is all I can inform your majesty of at present.

What do you say to the surrender of Port Mahon, taken almost without striking a blow, by a general of no great abilities, and the commander of Spanish soldiers? It was decreed that this place should be taken by poor generals;
by

by Richelieu first, and next by Crillon. This Crillon is the father of him whom, some years since, your majesty saw at Berlin, with the prince de Salm. It is said the siege of Gibraltar will be committed to him, but he may find this a morsel more hard of digestion. We must place our hopes however in providence, and especially in the English ministry, by recollecting the accumulated blunders they are guilty of, by sea and by land. May like blunders, often repeated, oblige them to make peace ! For, with respect to ourselves, we ask nothing more.

Your majesty has done me justice in thinking me very innocent of the spleen which you caught, by reading that wretched book on philosophy which it was thought proper to send you as coming from me. You should by this have received another book, which I have had the honour to send you ; but have taken care to inform you it is a book not proper to be read by you ; and that it is merely a mark of respect, from the university of Paris, where the philosophic monarch is held in admiration ; and a testimony of gratitude, for the encouragement you have been pleased to give to one of her students.

I am, with the most profound and the most tender respect, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CCXXV.

From the King.

May 18, 1782.

TO me it has happened as to you, respecting the morality of the stoics, which I have admired, while I have been grieved that their very respectable sage was an imaginary being of reason. The following fine line, by Voltaire, is very applicable to this subject.

*Tes desirs sont d'un homme, et tes vœux sont d'un Dieu *.*

Whatever love we may have for mankind, no legislator, no philosopher can ever change the nature of things. It is probable our species must necessarily be such as we find it to be; a strange mixture of good and ill qualities. Education, and study, may extend the sphere of our knowledge; a good government may form hypocrites, who may put on the mask of virtue; but never will either be able to alter the nature of the mind. I regard man as a machine, subject to springs that direct his motions; and what we call wisdom, or reason, is nothing more than the fruit of experience, which, influencing our

* Thy acts are human, but thy thoughts divine.

hopes

hopes and fears, determines our actions. This doctrine, my dear Anaxagoras, is rather humiliating to self-love; but, unfortunately, it is but too true.

Be these things as they may I esteem the stoics, and thank the sect, with a most grateful heart, for having produced such men as Lælius, Cato of Utica, Epictetus, and especially Marcus Aurelius. None of the other philosophic sects can vaunt of such disciples; and I wish, for the good of Europe, the race were not extinct. It is vexatious that all people in pain are obliged unequivocally to give Zeno the lie; there are none of them who do not allow that pain is a very great evil.

I much wish our good mother Nature would dispense with putting you to the grievous task of producing pyrenees, and alps, in your kidneys; yet this is too serious an evil to be joked with; especially while you suffer, you whom Parnassus, and all thinking beings, wish to see live eternally. I therefore hope to hear that this vile disease does not grow worse, and that your friends may flatter themselves they may still, for many years, enjoy your company.

What shall I say to you of the holy father? His infallibility is lost, since he has thought proper to go to Vienna, there to be a spectator

of his own degradation. With respect to Austria, the business is over; but you French people will not imitate the conduct of the emperor. There is more superstition in your country than in any kingdom of Europe. Your priests have usurped an authority which is a counterpoise to that of the sovereign; nor will your king dare to form any plan against so powerful a body, without first having taken the most sage measures, to give success to so bold an attempt. Therefore, all things well considered, the provinces of the emperor will alone profit by this schism of the church; and other sovereigns will want courage, wisdom, or means, to follow the example. Do not however flatter yourself that we shall live to see reason the ruler of mankind; recollect that it is not long since a German prince caused masses to be said on the belly of his consort, from a persuasion she would become pregnant. Know that a sect in Saxony invokes the dead, like the witch of Endor; and know likewise that the free-masons form, in their lodges, a religious sect more absurd, and this is a bold saying, than any sect at present existing.

Such is poor human nature, and such will it be to the end of time. Follies, fables, and the marvellous will ever be victorious over reason,
and

and truth. Well might Fontenelle say that, had he his hand full of truths, he would not open it, that they might fly abroad, because the world was unworthy of truth.

Do you know what has happened to me this very day? I, who imagined the abbé Raynal was shut up in some dungeon of your inquisition, saw him make his entrance here. He is to come to me this afternoon, nor will I quit him while he has any thing more to say. Yes! I have seen the author of—*The Stadtholdership, and of the Commerce of Europe* *. His knowledge is great, for which he is indebted to the curious researches he has made. I thought I was conversing with providence itself. Governments are all weighed in his scale; and it would be to risk banishment to modestly dare to affirm, in his presence, that the trade of any power is some millions more lucrative than he has declared it to be. Whether the statements collected by him have all the authenticity which is requisite, on such subjects, remains to be known.

You speak to me of Europe, and I tell you I keep rolling my tub, as Diogenes did during the troubles of Greece. The North is ardently desirous of peace. Notwithstanding maritime associations, and the code of Catherine, relative

* *Du Statthouderat et du Commerce de l'Europe.*

to the empire of Neptune, his dominions continue to suffer the same molestation, by the heavy insurances which privateering obliges trade to pay.

A great genius, who lives up five pair of stairs in some street of the fauxbourg Saint Germain, and who there seated despotically governs Europe, has lately addressed an excellent project for a general pacification to me. The spirit of the abbé de Saint Pierre has descended upon him, with policy so profound as to be worthy of Gargantua. France swarms with great men who labour, in their obscurity, for its utmost benefit. Pity it is that men of such rare genius should not have a few kingdoms to burn; I would say to govern.

But, happen what will to Europe, I shall be satisfied with wishing health to the sage Anaxagoras. We will enter into a league, for our departure from this vale of misery, that we may travel together, in order to become nothing.

On which I pray, &c.

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LETTER CCXXVI.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, June 21, 1782.

THAT which your majesty has done me the honour to write, on the high and exaggerated philosophy of the stoics, is beyond comparison better adapted to my purpose than philosophy so imaginary and gigantic. I, like your majesty, never will grant, with these gentlemen, that pain is not an evil; and my wretched disease but too frequently, and every day, tells me they are liars. I should willingly say, as king Alphonso did of the world, that, had God asked my opinion, when he fabricated the vesica of man, I certainly should have given him good advice. I am not however worse than I was two months ago; but I continually, and with reason, fear that my malady will increase with age. To comfort myself, I repeat the line of Racine—

*Je ne veux point prévoir les malheurs de si loin *.*

I dwell too long on this dull subject, on which I have only spoken in answer to the kind inquiries of your majesty. May you, sire, live in

* Far distant misery let me not behold.

Z 3

health,

health, and free from pain, and then let me suffer all that it shall please nature to inflict. I shall be satisfied, or at least shall be consoled.

His holiness seems to me to have put a good face on a bad cause, as the saying is. He has bestowed great praises on the *piety* of his imperial majesty, and administered the sacrament to him on Holy Thursday, according to the gazettes. Much good may it all do him ! What will become of the suppressed monasteries is yet to be known. Some letters from Germany, and particularly from Flanders, appear to entertain doubts of the entire accomplishment of his imperial, and anti-monastic, project. It is pretended that, since his interview with the pope, the demolition of the suppressed monasteries proceeds slowly. So much the worse for him, if this be true : it were better he should have done nothing, than do what he has begun by halves.

I should be much more interested, sire, had we the fortitude, in France, to imitate such a reform. Alas, as your majesty well says, we shall do no such a thing ; but, while we despise priests, and monks, we shall pay them the honour of dreading and sparing them. We have long since written the finest things possible, on the subject ; but we only write, and do not act.

Others

Others act, and do not write. In this we imitate our conduct in war, and music; we scribble books, and do nothing more.

But, a propos of war, what does your majesty think of our defeat near the Antilles? The affair of the twelfth of April is, in my opinion, the master-piece of ignorance, and French bravado. God grant us that peace of which we have so much need! Nor have our enemies much less; for their blunders nearly equal ours. Perhaps peace would soon be concluded, did it not please the grand protector of the inquisition obstinately to continue this delightful siege of Gibraltar; before which place the Spanish nation, and their king, have for four successive years acquired such splendid renown!

Your majesty appears to me to have rightly judged the abbé Raynal; he is too sure of himself, in every thing he advances; and tells almost every sovereign, and every state in Europe, that he is better acquainted than they themselves are with their strength, and their revenues. His work, in other respects, is useful, and has acquired him among foreigners, and even in his own country, a degree of celebrity which rewards him for the persecution he has suffered, from fanatics. I am informed that he is enraptured with your majesty, and this I can very

readily believe. I, from experience, know that you dismiss all that have the happiness to approach you in the same temper.

During a month, the *comte and comtesse du Nord** have been here. They departed two days ago for Brest, and appeared well satisfied with their residence at Paris, and the eager welcome with which they were received by all ranks. On their own part, they were very successful by the politeness with which they accosted every person. The *comte du Nord* did me the honour to visit me, even before I had taken the liberty to pay him my respects. He said the most flattering things on the desire they had *to possess me* at Petersburg, such were the terms in which he was pleased to express himself, and of his individual regret not to see me there. I am exceedingly sensible of this regret; but I far from repent, and now perhaps less than ever, that I did not accept the offers that were made me; nor shall I during life forget that conversation, so interesting to me, which I had with your majesty, on this subject, at Cleves, in 1763.

Receive, sire, with your usual bounty, the most sincere homage of that tender veneration with which I shall, all my life, &c.

* The travelling names of the grand duke, and duchess, of Russia. T.

P. S. I know not whether your majesty have received the work, which I had the honour to send you, on the part of the college of Louis the Great, and the university of Paris; not to be read, but as a mark of their profound respect, and of their lively gratitude.

LETTER CCXXVII.

From the King.

July 5, 1782.

I OWN, after having well studied the opinions of the stoics, they appear to me to have too much exalted human nature. They were persuaded by vanity that each possessed, in himself, a part of the soul of nature; which part, they thought, might attain the perfections of the Deity whom it was to rejoin, after the death of the body which it had animated. The system is beautiful and sublime; it wants nothing but truth.

However, there is dignity in rising superior to the vexatious events to which men are liable; and stoicism, not carried to excess, is the sole resource of the unfortunate. Still we must be careful not to swell ourselves with a supposed perfection,

perfection, at which we never can arrive; nor ought we to compose an imaginary genealogy, which, far from ennobling, degrades us; because when we consider the turpitude and crimes of our species, it is more probable to suppose us the descendants of evil beings, if such exist, than of a being the very nature of whom ought to be goodness. But, whenever gout, stone, or the bull of Phalaris interfere, the piercing cries that escape the patient attest that pain is a most real evil. I hope your disease will no longer oblige you to give the lie to the stoics. My soul has taught me, by experience, that she is the very humble servant of my body; and, as often as that suffers, she is very ill at her ease; so much are intellectual faculties subjected by the mechanism of man's organization.

What a stride! From the stoics to his holiness the pope! But, having made it, I will continue my road. This poor priest has proved the falsity of his infallibility, by his journey to Vienna, and has exposed himself to meet the refusal, which he might have expected. The emperor continues his secularizations without intermission; and it appears that rich monasteries are preferred to the beggarly. The latter are not molested, although the public good demanded their reform in preference to the others. I very

much doubt that France will imitate the august Germanic Cæsar; or not at least till your comptroller-general shall have exhausted every resource of his industry, to supply the funds of government. In Prussia, things remain in their former state; for I respect the right of possession, on which all society is founded.

We are here informed of the defeat of the comte de Grasse, who shewed great valour during the battle, which to him was so unsuccessful. The marine of England appears greatly superior, in manœuvring, to that of France. Your countrymen want exercise, and experience, by the aid of which they might arrive at perfection, were they encouraged to apply themselves, and were they thus busied in time of peace.

I perceive, with pleasure, you were satisfied with the grand duke, and with the visit which he paid you. He is a prince who possesses great and good qualities. He is inclined to be grave, which is a part of his character; but this character is in reality excellent.

The abbé Raynal is still at Berlin, there collecting materials to write the history of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The work will appear too late. In 1680, it would have been proper to have demonstrated, to Louis XIV. how infinite was the injury his kingdom
would

would suffer, by the expulsion of a prodigious number of inhabitants, who bore their industry with them, into every part of Europe. The French at present are sensible of this, when it can no longer be remedied.

I believe I thanked you, in one of my former letters, for the work from the college of Louis the Great, which you sent me. I give you notice of a new work on * * *. How long will men have the folly to continue to write their stupid dreams on such a subject? I adhere to the general and permanent laws which all the elements obey, and these to me are sufficient. Live, my dear D'Alembert, for the honour of philosophy, and let me occasionally hear from you.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXVIII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, August 9, 1782.

FROM the public papers I learn the death of the queen-dowager of Sweden, your majesty's sister, your attachment to whom must have rendered you highly sensible of her loss;

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and I entreat your majesty will remain persuaded of my participation in your just grief. This respectable princess had formerly even honoured me by her favours, and made me a member of an academy which she had formed in her palace, and which the unfortunate troubles of the kingdom would not allow to subsist ; therefore, from gratitude to her memory, from my attachment, first, to your august house, and especially from the tender and respectful interest I take in whatever can affect your majesty, I cannot but owe that just regret to the loss of the queen of Sweden which I lay at the feet of my benefactor.

Having acquitted myself of this duty, or rather after this sincere expansion of heart, it becomes me to answer the excellent philosophic letter with which your majesty has honoured me, on the affliction I endure. How much truth and wisdom is there in all you have said of the philosophy of the stoics, which is rather grand than natural, and very little proper, with its high sounding phrases, and inflated principles, to alleviate the feelings of the suffering ! Fortunately, I begin to have less need of the aid of this strange pharmacopeia. My pain is much decreased, and has almost left me, thanks to *the disease of the north* ; which, giving me a violent cold,

cold, and a severe fit of the rheumatism, has removed the seat of pain from the vesica to the breast, and limbs. God grant that this may be something more than a truce ; and that, when my cold shall be gone, the enemy may not return to his former camp, from which he annoyed me so much !

I detain your majesty too long on the subject of my own wretchedness ; let me rather inform you that your good health comforts me for my own sickly state ; and that, as I am assured by all those who have seen you, sire, it promises to yourself, and to Europe, many future years of a life which never can be too long, for the good of your people, the peace of Germany, and the honour and the support of philosophy ; especially of one who, though the least of philosophers, is the first and most zealous of your admirers.

This philosophy, sire, has more than ever need of protectors, and examples, like yourself. It is at this moment exhibited, in a silly and indecent manner, on the French stage ; and the farce, which degrades its authors only, has the honour to meet with important protectors, who in their hearts suspect philosophy holds them in profound contempt ; although they do not vaunt of their suspicions, but by the penetration of
their

their great wit they have imagined the fact, and endeavoured to be revenged, by means as worthy of themselves from their nature as from their success.

Your majesty reasons well on the proceedings of the Cæsar Joseph, who spares the begging friars, those night-mares of the state, and of the people. The indolent-wealthy, and the indolent-beggar, ought alike to be eradicated. In France, we only concern ourselves with the farces of our show booths, and are ignorant of the progress of the Imperial suppression, and the orders issued against the monastic crew. It is rumoured that the bishops and monks had formed a conspiracy against the emperor, which had been timely discovered. I nevertheless think that the whole race is much less to be feared than it appears to be, by a prince who possesses three hundred thousand men, and unshaken resolution; that the church is highly honoured while thus feared; and that she never can injure any, except those who have the weakness to stand in awe of her power. I am well convinced that, should your majesty reduce her to reason for any folly she should attempt to commit, you might walk unarmed in the middle of a procession, without the least cause of apprehension. The procession of the league would
never

never have had equal advantages, under any monarch, except such a one as was Henry III.; and certainly not under a sovereign like Frederic.

We have been told that the abbé Raynal has been seriously ill. I wish he may live long enough to conclude his useful work, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes. Alas! Well may your majesty say the work will appear too late, for the happiness of France. Still it may serve as instruction, and example, to unfortunate princes; who, in the succession of ages, may venture to commit similar absurdities. Perhaps it will prove the folly of our present laws, as they relate to protestant subjects, who are still induced from the love of their country to remain in France, though under the dread of seeing their unfortunate children declared illegitimate, and deprived of the rights of citizens. Oh what a disgrace it is, to our age, that it is necessary we should, in France, believe in transubstantiation (a word fearful to pronounce, or to write) before we can have any claim to the inheritance of our fathers!

Our princes are gone to Gibraltar. I should be better pleased, both in behalf of Spain and France, to see your majesty there. I should be more certain of the success of the siege, which
will

will have continued, even should it be taken, almost as long as the siege of Troy. But the Spaniards are no Greeks. On the 28th of this month, it is affirmed, nine hundred and ninety pieces of artillery will endeavour to lay the rock in ruins. God send them success; and, more especially, may God grant peace to those who have so much need of it, and who so ill understand how to make war!

I am, with the most profound and the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXIX.

From the King.

September 8, 1782.

I AM obliged to you for the part you take in the loss which my family has lately suffered. Were we to judge from what we see, it should appear that the evil run of Jupiter is more vast, and full, than that from which he dispenses his favours on the earth: ten ill accidents for one good. There are persons who voluntarily rid themselves of life, but I am acquainted with none who die of grief. When misfortunes which regard only ourselves overwhelm us, it is the

pride of vanity to oppose them by fortitude; but, when we suffer losses which eternity itself cannot repair, there is nothing remaining in the bottom of Pandora's box for our consolation; except, to a man of my age, the firm persuasion we shall soon rejoin those who have gone before us. It must be owned man is rather a feeling than a rational animal. A stoic would say, to the wounded heart—"Thou oughtest to be insensible to pain." But I feel it in my own despite; it wastes, it distracts me. An interior sensation, too potent for my will, wrings from me complaints, and ineffectual regret. I shall speak no more on the melancholy subject, which can engender none but melancholy and gloomy thoughts.

I abandon every thing which relates to literature in your country, except the abbé Delisle, the only person you possess, in my opinion, who is worthy the age of Louis XIV; and I trouble myself little concerning your theatre, your farces, your Ramponet, or all your merry-andrews. The close of this century has no resource, for the acquirement of fame, except in physics, in which it has made curious researches. Could the absurdities of theological metaphysics have been annihilated, they would have been by the thunderbolts of philosophy. Take notice however that,
our

our species being formed with an inclination almost irresistible for superstition and the marvellous, monks and soothsayers have found but little difficulty in filling the mind with that disgusting mass of absurdities by which they govern it. The vulgar, who are every where most numerous, always suffer themselves to be led by knaves and impostors, who are the inventors of and commentators on puerile fables; whereas the number of sages will ever remain small. The multitude of the foolish must, therefore, ever prevail over the few thinking beings who have the wisdom to employ their reason.

While the emperor pulls down monasteries, I build up catholic churches that have been burnt; leaving each man to think as he shall please, and believing that what Fontenelle said, of his handful of truths, was sagely said; for the many were unworthy his attention. This unfortunately is but too true. An ass bends beneath the burthen, when overloaded; but an enthusiast bears whatever weight the priest shall think proper to lay upon him; nor does he perceive the unworthy manner in which he is degraded.

With respect to the present wars, I think like you, and should applaud the prodigious efforts

of the belligerent powers, were all their immense preparations to be quickly productive of peace.

I have been three weeks absent, during which I have heard nothing of the abbé Raynal. He has been with my brother, as I am told, but I know no more.

May the hooping-cough, or *the disease of the North*, cure you of all your infirmities; and may neither the kidneys nor the lungs load you with those afflictions which render life burthensome, and insupportable.

On which I pray, &c. o

I fear my letter will not add to your mirth; have a little patience, and time will do that which reason has vainly endeavoured to effect.

L E T T E R CCXXX.

From M. D'Alembert.

SIRE,

Paris, October 11, 1782.

WELL may your majesty say that the evil tun of Jupiter, from which he scatters woes over mankind, is much greater, and better replenished, than that from which he disperses good. My wretched vesica makes me too sensible of this; for my sufferings during a month have

have

have been great, insomuch that inflammation has been feared. I have committed myself to the guidance of the most able physician of France, and at present either he or nature has given me ease. God knows how long this will continue.

But wherefore entertain your majesty with my afflictions? Rather let me inform you, or in other words repeat, all that I have felt for near forty years, when I first began to receive your favours. The letters with which you are pleased to honour me are new proofs, which are to me the more precious, because, in my present condition, I no longer can hope to travel and pay my personal homage to you. These letters at least console me for the ills I feel; and pay, in part, the good of which I am deprived, in not hearing that, from the mouth of your majesty, which you have the bounty to write. I will venture to say that this age, which long, and with so much justice, has called you the philosophic king, does not know so well as I do how truly you deserve the title. It has not, like me, the advantage of reading, in your letters, that true, sound, and useful, morality with which they abound; morality which every man may put in practice, and not gigantic, and exaggerated, like that of the stoics, and Epictetus; morality which has rendered you greater

in misfortune than even in success; in fine, morality which, to me, at once affords instruction and example.

I have entreated the marquis d'Eterno, who has lately departed to reside as ambassador from France in Prussia, should he find an opportunity, to lay at your majesty's feet all the sentiments with which I am penetrated, as well as my grief at being myself unable to express them personally. The marquis d'Eterno is a prudent, well-bred, virtuous, and enlightened man, with whom I have reason to believe your majesty will be satisfied. May he continue to maintain that good intelligence which so long has reigned between your majesty and France; which a woman and an insignificant priest had destroyed; and which appears to have nearly recovered its natural state.

Alas! Sire, you are in the enjoyment of peace and glory; but our poor France, at present, is deprived of both. What does your majesty think of the fine attempts that have been made before Gibraltar; of our floating batteries, which threatened ruin, and did not once suspect they might be burnt by red-hot balls? Never perhaps was there a more melancholy example of French levity, and boasting. What is still worse, these attempts perhaps have made
peace.

peace more distant, necessary though it be to us, and our enemies. We do not however despair but that it may be concluded this winter, remembering the inability of the two nations to continue their murderous occupation; for, when men thus march to murder, they will be paid the price of blood; and money, which is the sinew of war, is wanted by each nation.

We are told that the abbé Raynal is settled in your majesty's states. It is necessary, for his history of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, that he should write it in a country where he is secure from fanatics. Unfortunately, as your majesty has well observed in one of your last letters, the book will only shew France how vast is the wrong she did herself by that revocation, which wrong it is too late to repair; but we do not so much as endeavour to prevent its consequences, not even by permitting protestants to marry. We shall be the last to put that which we have written in practice, and which other nations have executed. May God at length enlighten our minds!

Our great lords, in the mean time, commit acts of scandalous and incredible bankruptcy. The prince de Rohan Guémené, grand chamberlain to his majesty, and husband to the governess of the royal children, is become a bankrupt

for not less than twenty millions. (Upward of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling.) and has brought thousands of citizens, who entrusted their fortunes in his hands, to beggary. The indignation and the cries of the public, against an act so abominable, are extreme; but the guilty remains unpunished. All France exclaims he would not so remain in Prussia; nor would he indeed here, did our monarch listen only to those principles of justice which are native to his mind, and did he not yield to the entreaties of the Rohans, who make the public the sacrifice of their vanity.

All this will but be, to me, a light evil, while I shall have the happiness to preserve your majesty. Let me entreat you to take precautions on the approach of winter, that you may prevent those attacks of the gout by which you are generally tormented, at that season of the year; and that you may preserve a life so necessary to your people, to Europe, to humanity, philosophy, letters, and especially to me.

I am, with the most tender veneration, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CCXXXI.

From the King.

October 30, 1782.

WE must restore to nature, my dear D'Alembert, by degrees, that which, by degrees, nature gave; and, though your disease and mine are both very painful, it were better to endure such sufferings than to feel a defect of memory, and consequently of thought. The muses were the daughters of memory, by which we are taught that, without memory, the faculties of the mind all lay dormant. For my part, I am continually at war with my memory, and combating to oblige her to stay in her own despite, whenever she attempts to escape my grasp. All things make us perceive the fragility of our nature, our individual insignificance, and that eternal oblivion in which we are soon to be lost. Yet, in such a situation, have we the effrontery to plume ourselves on our own consequence, to make ourselves almost the associates of the deity, and to talk of grandeurs, dignities, majesty, and a hundred other lunatic whims, which make the hearts of those who study man, his nature, vanity, and non-entity, revolt.

But

But I quit these too cloudy and mournful reflections, to speak on subjects less gloomy ; and first of the marquis d'Eterno, who is just arrived, and who appears to me a man of excellent qualities, as far as I can judge from a first conversation. Our females are exceedingly chagrined, that his lady has not accompanied him ; for they hoped that a French lady would be the legislatrix of the graces to the Germans, an accomplished model that they might study, who would teach them to lay on the varnish of fashion over the rusticity which they still preserve, and which takes date from the æra of the Obotrites.

I know not whether it be a sentiment of equity or want of discernment, but no person in these countries attributes the misfortunes which have befallen the floating batteries of Spain, before Gibraltar, to the French. It is imagined that his catholic majesty was absolutely resolved to take the horns of the moon between his teeth, and that his faithful subjects have ineffectually exhausted every effort to satisfy his mad project. Gibraltar however, if not revictualled by the English, may still fall. Hunger may effect what floating batteries have attempted in vain.

You envy that peace we now enjoy, without recollecting that it is the destiny of kingdoms to be alternately actors and spectators, on the great stage

stage where men perform their tragedies. Scarcely had we quitted the boards before you made your entrance; and, should peace be concluded in the west, the great Catherine will make herself the subject of discourse, in regions from which we see the sun forsaking the arms of Amphitrite. The phrase, poetical as it may appear, is not misplaced, when it relates to projects which inflame the fancy, and give birth to combinations the most vast. Thus do amplification and hyperbole become tubes, which enlarge our wretchedness, in the eye of imagination. Ask me not whether the abbé Raynal employ these tubes. I know that he is collecting materials, and that he finds, among the refugees, all that information which is necessary to him, in order to depict the effects of which the revocation of the edict of Nantes has been productive. He will shew the result of that false step of Louis XIV. and will speak of the losses occasioned by the persecuting spirit of France. But the Sorbonne will reply, with Bossuet—
 “Active instrument * of a ready writer and
 “an industrious hand, hasten to rank Louis
 “with men like Constantine and Theodosius.

* This is a rhetorical figure, borrowed from the Psalms.
 † “My tongue is the pen of,” &c. T.

“Learn

“ Learn from Sozomen that, since the time
 “ when God first raised up christian princes,
 “ we have forbidden conventicles ; the law has
 “ not permitted heretics to hold public assem-
 “ blies. Hence most of them have rejoined the
 “ church ; and the obstinate have died without
 “ successors, because they no longer could com-
 “ municate with each other, nor propagate their
 “ opinions. The depopulation which a coun-
 “ try suffers is a mundane evil ; but hearts, di-
 “ vinely enlightened, think those are only real
 “ evils which turn them, and their countrymen,
 “ from the road of salvation.”

I leave the abbé Raynal to answer this fine bombast ; which may be very satisfactory to repentant imbecility, but is not very convincing to the philosopher.

Our academy has lately acquired a new member, who flies from tribulation, which some reasonable and modest phrases had drawn upon him at Turin. His name is Denina ; he is an abbé, and was a professor in the university of Turin. He is probably known to you by his History of the Revolutions of Greece, and of Italy. He comes to proclaim that aloud, in Germany, which he silently thought, in Italy.

You talk to me of bankrupts, as if bankruptcy were known only at Paris. We at least
 have

have had one, at the beginning of the year, of no contemptible amount, being not less than six millions of French livres. (Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling.) All things considered in proportion, six millions are to us as much as twenty to France. Beware lest the bankrupt prince de Guémené should be the precursor of a still greater bankruptcy! England, Spain, and France are exhausted by the present war. To this they must come at last. The whole world are bankrupts in turn. The good christian is a bankrupt to the concupiscence of the flesh; the sick man to voluptuousness; the philosopher to error; the man with an empty purse to his creditor. And what is death itself, but the last act of bankruptcy? Near failure as I am myself, I lose sight of the charms of the world, and can see nothing but illusion. Whether assailed by gout or any other disease, I know it is only the coachman who is to drive me into the country from which no man returns*; and I wait the moment of departure

* This phrase, which is a favourite one with the king, is no doubt borrowed from—"The undiscovered country" &c. in Hamlet; of which play (translated) the Germans are so enamoured as to affirm, and almost without hyperbole, that there is no accident that can befall man to which a suitable apophthegm may not there be found. T.

with entire resignation, and destitute of all fear of futurity. I shall dispute precedence with you, and, as I came first into the world, I claim the right of going first out of it; assuring you that, while life shall continue, my prayers shall be for your happiness.

On which, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXII.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, December 13, 1782.

I HAVE entreated the baron von Goltz to make my very humble excuse to your majesty, that I have not had the honour sooner to answer the charming letter which I received from you, dated the 30th of October last. My apologies, to my misfortune, are but too well founded. During the greatest part of the month of November, I have cruelly suffered under my accursed malady. I will not weary your majesty with a detail of my sufferings; let it suffice to say, they are very much decreased, and that I seize the first opportunity, with the permission of pain, to write and to renew my homage, of respectful gratitude, to your majesty; and of every
other

other sentiment which are all so justly yours, and which I have so long vowed to preserve.

The reflections of your majesty on all the miseries to which human nature is subject, and on the contrast between this wretchedness, and our pitiable and ridiculous vanity, are well worthy of a philosophic king, who rises, on eagle wings, superior to all the fools of our species. These reflections merit the signature of Marcus-Aurelius-Frederic. I am sorry however if, as your majesty says, you begin to lose your memory. It is long since I began to lose mine; but memory is more indispensable to a prince than to an obscure and unconnected individual. May Nature long preserve this blessing for your majesty, and for the good of so many beings to whom you are necessary; and may she, at the same time, forbear to afflict you with the pangs of disease, which I wish I could relieve you from myself, were it even at the expence of additional sufferings!

I am delighted to find your majesty thinks the marquis d'Eterno such as I had the honour to describe him; and have good reason to believe this opinion will be strengthened, in proportion as he is better known; and that you will find him to be, as he is, sage, well informed, modest, and polite.

I know not to whom must be attributed the ill success of our floating batteries ; nor do I know by what fatality fifty ships, French and Spanish, have suffered thirty-four English ships, two or three times, to pass and repass, under their very nose, without firing a gun ! But I know that this infernal siege of Gibraltar, so ridiculously undertaken, and still more ridiculously prosecuted, has been the principal cause of our misfortunes, or of our follies ; that it has prolonged the war two or three years, and has therefore retarded the advantageous peace which we might have made.

At length, thank Heaven, according to all appearances, we have reason to hope this peace will be concluded ; it is even so said to be at present. Praised be the fates ! Provided the great Catherine and Cæsar Joseph do not begin new wars, by the invasion of Turkey. Above all things, may these blind fates never engage your majesty in any such new war, of which your glory has no need, and which must be fatal to your health and repose !

We have read with edification, in the public papers, your majesty's declaration, to the catholic clergy of Silesia, of the *Te Deum* which the Romish church has sung, returning thanks to God, for having found a protector in you, and
of

of the emigration of a posse of Austrian nuns, who fled to you for asylum. When your majesty recommended toleration to sovereigns, it most assuredly might have been said that you preached by example; and it might more especially so be said in the present conjuncture. The Romish church, however, will remain neither less persecuting nor intolerant, whenever she so can be. Here are our priests presenting a petition to the king, against the subscribers to the new edition which is preparing of the works of Voltaire. The petition was addressed to the proper person, for his majesty is one of the subscribers. We scarcely know whether we ought to laugh or be angry, at such stupid folly.

Were the work of the abbé Raynal to be every thing it could be hoped, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, it will come too late for France. She will not be able to recover, at pleasure, all she lost by that absurd and fatal revocation. I even fear the work will not induce her to commit no more equally absurd follies, should a proper opportunity present itself. For when were men reformed by books?

I have no doubt but people become bankrupts in Prussia, as well as in other places; but not in a manner so monstrous, so atrocious, so impudent, so scandalous, as the prince who is

no longer here called Rohan Guémené, but ***. I repeat, sire, all France exclaims, under you he would have suffered exemplary punishment. His only punishment with us is the loss of his places, which it was impossible he should keep. A thousand families perhaps are brought to beggary by this bankruptcy, which is said to amount to near forty millions in France and foreign countries, inclusively. The cries of the sufferers are vain: the influence of the **** and his creatures is too powerful.

We shall soon begin the new year, which is the forty-third of your glorious reign, and the thirty-seventh of the bounty with which your majesty has honoured me. May your subjects preserve such a king still forty years longer; and may the same bounty console me, not forty years more, but, to the end of my life! May you long enjoy the glory you have acquired, and the repose which you so well have purchased!

I am, with the most tender veneration, &c.

P. S. An estimable man of letters, M. de Villars, has desired me to present a letter from him to your majesty, and a prospectus of a journal which he proposes to print in your territories, at Neufchatel. He entreats the protection of your majesty, of which he will endeavour to render himself worthy.

L E T-

LETTER CCXXXIII.

From the King.

December 30, 1780.

YOU give me great pleasure, by informing me yourself of your state of convalescence. The most afflicting gift Nature ever conferred on man was that of forming a stone quarry in his intestines. Of all the woes he is condemned to suffer, those attendant on the stone are the most violent, and most demand our compassion; especially when they alight on people of such merit as Anáxagoras. For my part, I soon expect a present sent from madam Gout, who certainly is not one of the most amiable of ladies. Alas! My dear D'Alembert, the subject of our letters, formerly, was not our own infirmities, nor the progress of decay; but each day at present steals a part of our existence. This brings to my recollection the celebrated saying of a Spartan dame, when told that her son had been slain at the battle of Leuctra—"I did not bring him into the world to be immortal."

The war which your French and Spanish admirals make, at present, is in watching for the preservation of their men; in which they act very rightly, for peace will soon be concluded.

Floating batteries was most certainly a very heterodox idea, and could not be successful. The most courageous men may undertake difficult things; but impossibilities they abandon to lunatics.

We are, in the east, threatened with a new war. There are some who wish to place the breech of the puppet Constantine* on the sofa of Mustapha; and Cæsar Joseph, it is said, wishes to divide the spoil. He will be pleased with the Houris of the Seraglio; such, at least, is what our intelligence from Vienna relates.

The abbé Raynal is writing on the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and, when the work shall be printed, he will send it to Louis XIV. by the first courier who shall take his departure for the Elysian fields. For my part, I have made it a law to imitate all good actions, ancient and modern, and never to imitate the bad. I suffer each man to adore God as he shall think proper; and I suppose each has a right to choose the road he intends to travel, into the unknown country of Paradise, or Limbo. I am satisfied with the freedom of following, in like manner, the impulse of reason and my own mode of thinking; and, provided monks can but by just

* The name of the grand duke of Russia.

T.

shackles be prevented from disturbing the peace of society, tolerated they must be; for such is the will of the people.

Your M. de Villars, who certainly is not the marshal de Villars, may print whatever he please at Neufchatel; provided he spare the powers that be, and shock not the grandees of the earth; a kind of gentry who are very ticklish, concerning their prerogatives, dignities, and infallibility. You know priests call them the earthly images of God, and the fools really believe themselves so to be; for which reason, news-writers are under the necessity of respecting them, and managing their infinite delicacy with the most scrupulous attention.

Should the earthly image of God, at Versailles, forbid the publication of the works of Voltaire, the booksellers of Switzerland, Holland, and Germany, will gain the profits which would have accrued to the booksellers of France; and your priests, act how they will, never will be able, at the close of the eighteenth century, to revive the blessed stupidity of the year one thousand. Thinking people, who compare and combine ideas, are much disabused in respect to fable. The Sorbonne defends the breaches made in the fortrefs of Folly, and is satisfied that the imbecil multitude should still suppose it invul-

nerable. May good attend you the coming year; and especially may you have no nephritic colic! Take care to suspend your journey till I shall be ready to depart.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXIV.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, February 16, 1783.

FOR the last three months I have, with some few intervals of ease, been under continual pains; more or less acute, but always great. I profit, sire, by one of the least painful intervals to lay those sentiments at your majesty's feet which I so justly owe you, and properly to testify my lively gratitude, for the consolatory letters you have the goodness to write to me. They are the best balm Charity can pour into my wounds, and the only alleviation to my afflictions. Pain, on the one part, and dejection, which is its consequence, on the other, no longer permit me to interest myself in any thing, except the happiness and preservation of your majesty, and the good news which the baron von Goltz brings me of your health.

May

May I at length, though this I can little expect, make peace with my malady, as we have lately made with the English ; who, if I do not mistake, were in as great need of it as ourselves. Yes, peace at length is arrived ; and here will stay, till some political phrensy, let it come from what coast it will, shall bring back discord.

The Spaniards ought to think themselves very lucky, in the recovery of port Mahon and the two Floridas, after the ridiculous, and stupid, manner in which they have behaved. Their ignorance of every kind, however, does not prevent them from prescribing law even to our very theatre, on which the Spanish ambassador at present prevents the acting of a tragedy, the subject of which is the death of Don Carlos. You would scarcely have imagined, sire, that it should one day have been forbidden to exhibit, on the French theatre, the most cruel and the most abominable of the enemies of France, the execrable Philip II. But this persecution, which literature endures, is the consequence of the horrible inquisition to which it has been subjected. Happily, or unhappily, for me, my malady, which at present interests me most, will not suffer me to feel indignation, or even affliction, at perceiving vexations which do not reach me ; though I have many a rhapsody, to bestow on the world,

locked up in my bureau, when it shall please God to relieve me from pain.

We are continually menaced with troubles toward Turkey ; but may they never extend to us ! May they also, which unfortunately is more difficult of belief, never sufficiently interest you to disturb that peace which you enjoy with so much glory !

We impatiently wait for the new edition of the works of Voltaire ; which, it is affirmed, will appear in the course of the present year, should it please the argus Fanaticism to suffer these works to enter France. Our fools, as your majesty has well observed, will bestow that money on the Germans, and the Dutch, which *we* so merrily throw away. But this is no affair of mine ; let France look to herself. Well may your majesty say that the blockheadly cunning of priests, while they cry aloud, and pretend to believe that kings are the images of the Deity, wishes to persuade idiot monarchs that the church is the safeguard of their throne, and crown. Alas ! They bawl in the ears of kings that royalty is derived from God, only that they may with the more art and facility lay the yoke on the necks of kings themselves. Their silly syllogism, or sophism, would soon be formed, “ You,” say they to kings, “ derive your
“ power

“ power from God ; therefore, God may deprive you of power, whenever he shall please. “ Now it is we, the ministers of the living God, “ who announce his will to man ; therefore, on “ us your power depends.” Such was the logic of Gregory VII. and Innocent IX. and such will ever be the arguments of the sacerdotal cohort, when attended to by kings, and the mad multitude. I was as much afflicted as I was enraged at the incredible phrensy and folly of the author of the System of Nature ; who, far from depicting priests as they are, the true, the sole, and the only formidable enemies of princes, has represented them, on the contrary, as the support and allies of royalty. Never, perhaps, did philosophy utter a greater absurdity, or a more notorious falsehood ; though she has, on many another occasion, been false and absurd. Had I dared, I would have written, with all the powers I possess, to refute an assertion so stupid, and so prejudicial to kings and philosophers ; but the priests would have found means to suppress my thoughts ; so great is their influence in France, in despite of all the ill they effect, and all the impertinence they utter.

I am at present reading a translation of Euripides, the author of which is a member of the academy of Berlin. The work appears to me
estimable,

estimable, and I have been informed your majesty thinks the same. I am happy to find myself of your opinion.

I am, with the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXV.

From M. D'Alembert.

S I R E,

Paris, April 28, 1783.

I AM almost ashamed of incessantly wearying your majesty with my unfortunate condition; and I long would have been silent on so disagreeable a subject, did not the interest which you are so kindly pleased to take in it make it my duty to send you information. I wish at least to abridge the narrative, by confining myself to say, that I continue much in the same state; that I have periodical and acute pains, to which relaxation succeeds, though still attended with suffering; that I sleep very little at any time; and that weakness and dejection are almost continual.

The letters with which your majesty so kindly honours me are the only consolation I can find; and I receive, with the most tender gratitude, the new alleviation which you have been pleased

to

to administer to my afflictions, by commissioning the chevalier de Gauvin, secretary to the French embassy, to come and make inquiries, on his arrival at Paris, and to inform your majesty of the substance of them. Of this duty he acquitted himself, with zeal and ardour; an act as flattering as it was pleasing to me. He had the goodness even to come several times; and I, on my part, enjoyed the pleasure, so dear to my heart, of speaking much more of your majesty than of myself. I perceived, with the most innate and tender satisfaction, all the sentiments of respect, admiration, and gratitude, with which the chevalier de Gauvin is penetrated for your majesty.

I heard, with less astonishment than pleasure, of all the good you had done for your people; and I have likewise seen an interesting relation of this good, in a memorial which has lately been read by M. von Hertzberg, before the academy of Berlin. I read this relation to a society of friends, who assemble to converse with a man in affliction; and I sent them away penetrated with veneration for a prince so dear to his subjects, and so worthy to become, in all things, a model to other monarchs.

The mild and consolatory philosophy, with
which

which your majesty so kindly fills the letters you are pleased to write to me, is another of my comforts. Still philosophy has few arms, or resources, against physical evil; except patience, which is no cure.

Peace, at length, is made God. grant it a long continuance! War is not only a great evil, but neither we nor our enemies know how to make war. We still are threatened that it will soon again break out in the north, and in Turkey. Europe is in no need of this new scourge; and I sincerely wish it may not reach your majesty, to whom nothing now is necessary but rest, and the undisturbed enjoyment of your renown.

The new edition of the works of Voltaire is assiduously continued at Kehl. It will be a splendid one, and will be more rich, by several volumes, than the former editions. It is said, it will make its appearance in a year at the latest, and perhaps sooner.

A history of the Bastille has been published by Linguet, who lies with great impudence, and who consequently may perhaps not have spoken the truth, at present, although he has so fine an opportunity of speaking nothing but the truth. I have read the work on *les Lettres de Caquet*, which would

would have been better had the author, who is not Linguet, been less prodigal of common place remark, and declamation.

The Cæsar Joseph appears to me to continue his rigorous treatment of the sacerdotal legion. His example will certainly not be followed in France, where priests, though hated and despised by government, still preserve great influence; because ministers have the simplicity to fear them; as if they could possess any other power except that which government shall grant. Your majesty rightly observes error and folly are made for man; and we must resolve to suffer him to crouch beneath them, since he treats those so ill who endeavour to relieve him from the yoke.

I believe I have already done myself the honour to inform your majesty that I have read the translation of Euripides, by M. Prevôt, with as much pleasure as you have; and, that the translator is a man of much merit and knowledge of various kinds. I am unacquainted with the translation of the history of Augustus, by M. Moulines, and have written to Berlin to procure a copy; for this is a very interesting history.

As it is, at present, as far decided as physicians can decide that my disease is not the stone, I neither can nor ought to use remedies which
are

are said to be proper for that malady. Mine is difficult to define, and still more difficult to cure. Remedies that counteract each other are necessary, for I am subject both to relaxation and spasms. The doctors are bewildered, and I am deprived of hope.

I am, in despite of my woes, with the most tender veneration, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXVI.

From the King.

May 18, 1783.

M. DE SERAN gave me your letter at a time when I was too much occupied to converse with you at my ease. I heard, with pain, his relation of the state of your health. He tells me you have a hæmorrhage in a passage through which blood ought not to flow. This confirms the opinion I had conceived of your disease, and which I communicated to you in my last letter. The hæmorrhoids are a malady very common in this country; and this accident, by which it is said you are afflicted, has befallen many persons here, of which however they have been cured. If it can give you any satisfaction, I will

will send you prescriptions ; not written by myself, but by the best of our physicians.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXVII.

From the King.

July 22, 1783.

IT is exceedingly vexatious to find ourselves subjected to the ferula of the physician, and to surrender ourselves the slaves of his fantastic ideas. To avoid the yoke, it is necessary we should learn his art. The man who can controul the physician does not become the sport of his ignorance. You know that I have ever been the very humble admirer of the French ; but, however prepossessed I may be in favour of your nation, I venture to suspect that your abortive son of Hippocrates thoughtlessly, or ignorantly, determines on the use of the remedies which he prescribes. He is mistaken in his judgment ; he has confounded diseases, the symptoms of which are entirely different. The gravel is as opposite to the hæmorrhoids as the ostrich to the pigeon. I cannot but admire the indulgence with which you continue to confide your health
and

and life to the directions of a quack. Heaven grant you may not become his victim !

In our northern climates, the hæmorrhoids are very common ; and our physicians have profoundly studied the disease. Had you fallen into the hands of a more able doctor, you would have been cured in less than three months. Not that the malady can be totally removed ; but the course of the blood, of which Nature wishes to rid herself, would have been directed through the customary channel, where the hæmorrhoidal veins end.

Our physicians, who begin to be circumspect since they have on various occasions been ridiculed, will not write any prescriptions, till they first shall have received an exact detail of your sufferings, and their symptoms. Were they to act otherwise they would risk the loss of reputation ; for which reason they want the *status morbi* of the patient, to opine what are the drugs with which they shall poison him.

This is a subject of much nearer concern to you than the rising troubles of the east, the issue of which God only knows. Since the abdication of Charles V. we have seen him imitated by queen Christina ; Victor Amadæus has followed the illustrious example ; and with him Shah Gueray wishes to partake the same glory.

You

You will consequently allow there are monarchs who are undeceived, respecting this earth's grandeurs; and who, though they do not know it, are philosophers. Should the whim of imitating Dionysius of Syracuse ever enter my brain, I feel I am too ignorant to become, like him, a schoolmaster, and will satisfy myself with turning prompter to some company of players. But this shall be as it shall please Heaven. My prayers, for your preservation, still shall be the same.

On which, &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXVIII.

From the King.

September 30, 1783.

THE baron d'Echerny, whom I know not, and who has been burgomaster of Neufchatel, at forty crowns per annum, with the title of minister of state for the principality, has delivered your letter to me. I am very sorry to find he left you sick and suffering. Nature perhaps, at the close of life, wishes to inspire us with disgust for our existence, that we may leave the world with the less regret. Still however I am affected by your afflictions, and could wish you

would take the remedies of our German doctors, who are accustomed to treat the diseases under which you suffer ; and by which almost every man here is attacked.

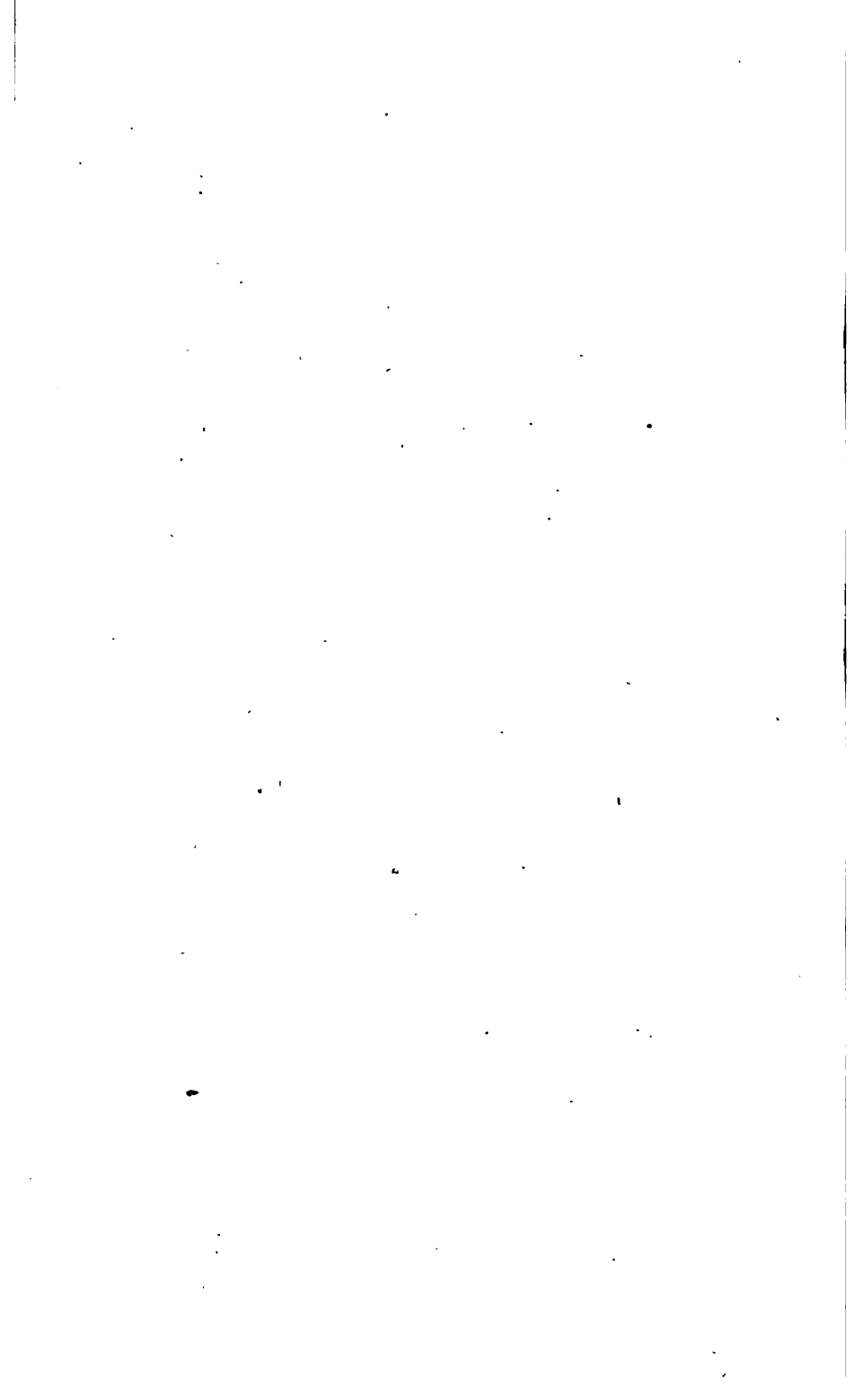
If by *gaps of philosophy* be understood all the subjects which the human mind has been unable to fathom, and with which the spirit of system has exercised itself, the collection of them would form a work twice as voluminous as the Encyclopedie. Man seems to me rather made to act than to understand. The principles of things conceal themselves from the most persevering inquiry. Half our life is passed away in freeing ourselves from the errors of our ancestors ; yet at the same time we leave Truth in her well, from which, in despite of every effort, she never will be drawn by posterity. Let us therefore sagely enjoy the few advantages that are allotted us, and let us frequently recollect that doubt is the attendant of knowledge.

But I did not perceive my letter was addressed to one of the greatest philosophers of our age, who has scrutinised all the secrets of nature ; and that one so ignorant as myself ought to assume a more modest tone, in his presence. You perceive, my dear D'Alembert, how much the character of king renders those who bear it impertinent and assuming. Philip of Macedon
would

would have been more prudent, and would not have dictated to Socrates, had he been his contemporary, but would have gained information in the company of the philosopher. I wish to do the same; I will be silent and listen, will read what you have written, and shrink behind that modesty which best becomes my ignorance. At present I must satisfy myself with a thousand good wishes for your preservation.

On which, &c.

*End of the Correspondence between FREDERIC II. and
M. D'ALEMBERT.*



L E T T E R S

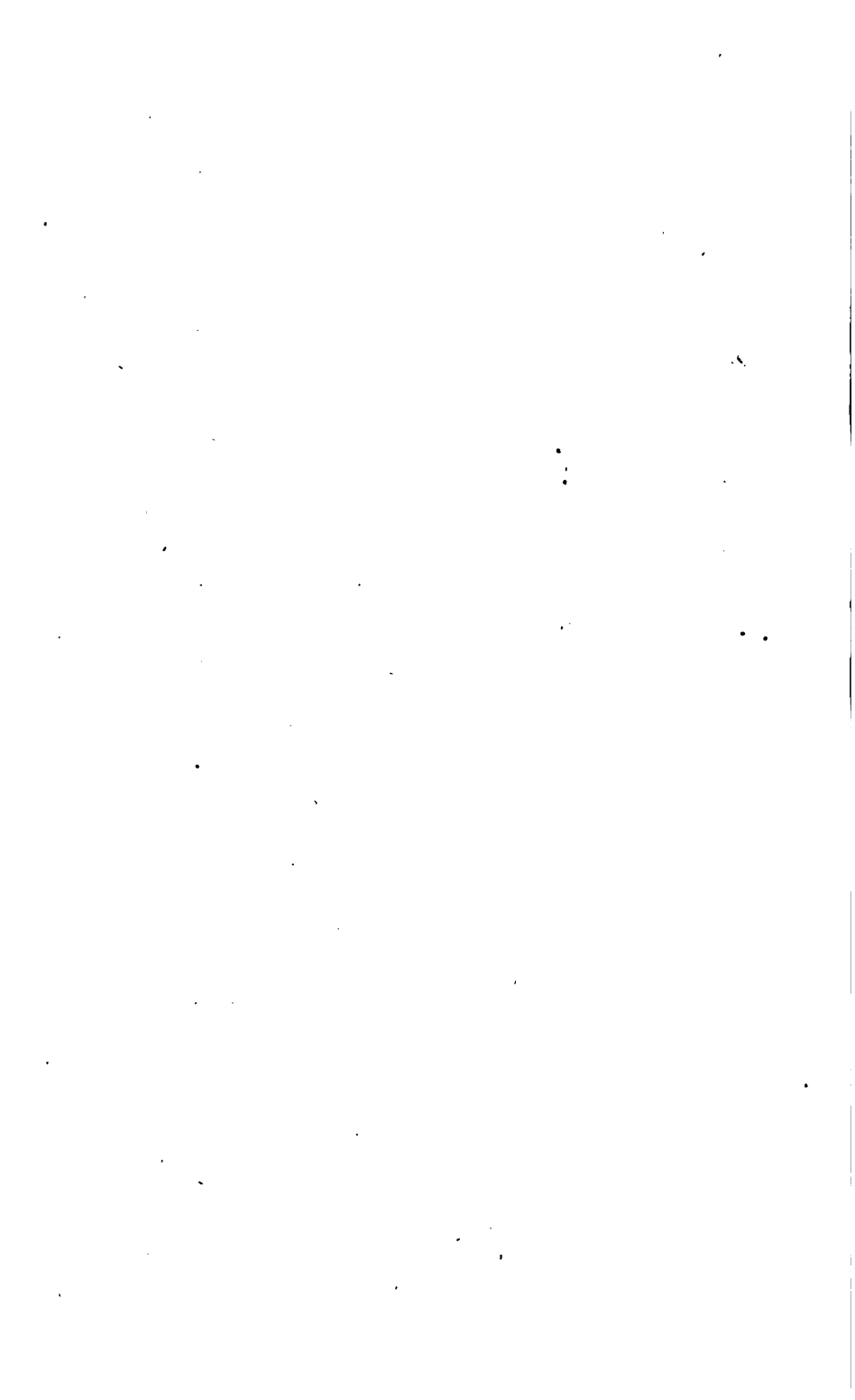
B E T W E E N

F R E D E R I C II.

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M. D E C O N D O R C E T.

C c 3



L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

AND

M. D E C O N D O R C E T.

L E T T E R I.

From M. de Condorcet.

S I R E,

Paris, December 22, 1783.

THE friend of M. D'Alembert dares flatter himself that your majesty will deign not to disapprove the liberty he takes, to inform you that he participates your grief. Honoured by the intimate confidence of that illustrious man, I knew how great was the esteem, and, I will venture to say, the friendship of your majesty for him. The expression seems to be authorised, in some degree, by the equality with which your majesty has ever treated men of superior

C c 4 genius;

genius ; for you, no doubt, was unable to conceal from yourself that they alone were truly worthy of being esteemed your equals.

M. D'Alembert, who appears to have dreaded the pains and infirmities of age, met the approach of death with all the tranquillity, but not the parade, of fortitude. He amused himself, during the last days of his life, with hearing the enigmas of the *Mercury** read, and divining their meaning. Two days before his death, he corrected a proof sheet of the new edition of his translation of Tacitus. He occupied himself with equal calmness and kindness ~~on the means~~ of ascertaining proper rewards to his servants, and succour to those to whom his benevolence afforded subsistence. With this view he chose me his heir, and gave me this last mark of his friendship and confidence.

He wished not to pay any tribute, not even in appearance, to the prejudices of his country, nor dying to render homage to what during life he had uniformly professed to despise.

Perhaps I shall afflict your majesty, or rather excite your indignation, by informing you of what happened after the death of a man who was an honour to his country. His curate, in-

* *Le Mercure* ; a French weekly publication so called. T,
deed,

deed, durst not refuse him burial. He knew I should have had the courage to appeal from such an act of fanaticism to the authority of the laws, and that the appeal would have been heard. The priest, therefore, confined himself to the refusal of burial in the church, a distinction absurd in itself, but still practised among us, and not refused to those who can pay, and on which the friends of M. D'Alembert set some value, because it would have given them the right to erect a monument to his memory. To this the curate added a denial of all the little honours which he could not grant, without committing himself with the clergy; and M. D'Alembert was borne without ceremony, amid a people who were astonished that their priests should treat a man with so much indecency, whose benevolence these same priests had never solicited in vain, when the wants of the poor were excessive.

M. D'Alembert has left one volume of mathematics, and several of philosophy and literature, ready for the press. I propose to publish a complete edition of his philosophic and literary works, and venture to ask your majesty permission to let it appear under your auspices. I solicit this favour in the name of M. D'Alembert, for my
own

own is too obscure, and too little known to your majesty.

Two days before his death, M. D'Alembert delivered his correspondence with your majesty, and all his papers, into my hands. When he performed this task, which was long, and very afflicting to friendship, he preserved a calm fortitude and presence of mind, by which it was impossible not to be affected, while his courage was admired. The letters of your majesty only, at this cruel moment, seemed to incite his regret, and to awaken his sensibility. It had long been his intention that they should be confided, after his death, to his old friend, M. Watelet, of the French Academy. The packet, sealed in the presence of M. D'Alembert, was thus remitted to that gentleman.

He has left other precious marks of your majesty's favour, and has disposed of only one of the portraits he received from you, which he bequeathed to madame Destouches, his father's widow, a respectable woman, who, from the childhood of M. D'Alembert, never ceased to afford him marks of friendship and esteem.

The other portraits I regard as a trust, which I shall exercise according to the directions your majesty shall deign to give.

The cause of reason has, in Europe, within

a few years, suffered reiterated losses, which will with difficulty be repaired. It still has one honourable support, and all who interest themselves in its progress most ardently with your majesty's preservation.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R II.

From the King.

Potsdam, April 6, 1785.

M. D'ALEMBERT formerly did me the pleasure to procure me some good members for the Academy of Sciences. I have lately lost two, and you will do me a real service if you can find me substitutes. The first was **M. Thiebault**, a grammarian and purist, whom I imagine the abbé **Beauzée** would be most proper to replace, should he think proper to accept his seat. The whole pension amounts to twelve hundred rix-dollars, and apartments.

The other who has left us is **M. Prevot**, whose department was that of philosophy and the belles lettres. No one is more capable of discovering successors to these members than yourself; and this, if possible, would add to the
esteem

esteem with which, by your character, and your works, I have been inspired for your person.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

L E T T E R III.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE,

Paris, May 2, 1785.

THE work which I have the honour to present to your majesty treats on very important subjects. I thought it might be useful to apply the calculation of probabilities to decisions given by a plurality of votes; and, as I have ever been almost equally a lover of mathematics and philosophy, I think myself fortunate to be able to gratify both these passions at once.

I dare not request your majesty would deign to glance over a discourse, in itself perhaps much too long, that explains the principles and consequences deduced from the work, free from all appearance of calculation. I shall only take the liberty to mention two of these consequences.

The one leads to regard the punishment of death as absolutely unjust, except in cases when the life of the culprit might be dangerous to so-

ciety. This calculation is drawn from a principle which I believe to be rigidly true, and which is, that all possibility of error in judgment is real injustice, when it does not result from the very nature of things, and when it originates in the will of the legislator. Now, as it cannot be absolutely certain that the person condemned is not innocent, and as it is exceedingly probable that, in a long list of sentences, an innocent person shall be condemned, the evident deduction appears to be that we cannot, without injustice, voluntarily render error irreparable, to which we are necessarily and involuntarily exposed.

The second consequence is the impossibility of fulfilling, by means of those forms to which decisions can be subjected, the requisite conditions; unless such decisions are made by very enlightened men; the result of which calculation is that the happiness of nations depends more on the information of the man by whom they are governed than on the form of political constitutions; and that the more complicated such forms are the more they approach democracy, and the less adapted are they to nations in which the majority of the inhabitants want sufficient information, or time, to occupy themselves on public affairs; that, in fine, the destruction of abuses, with promptitude and tranquillity,

quillity, may more reasonably be hoped in a monarchical, than in a republican, government.

The consequences may be important, were it only that they oppose that kind of exaggeration which has been attempted to be introduced in philosophy. But I have imagined it was necessary to limit myself to the mere act of pointing them out, in a work printed at the royal press.

I ask pardon of your majesty for speaking so much of my own ideas, and entreat you will regard the liberty I take, of presenting my work, as nothing more than a testimony of my admiration, and respect.

I shall use every endeavour to correspond to the confidence with which I am honoured by your majesty. I have hitherto only one person to propose as the successor of M. Thiebault in the academy, and a teacher of grammar. This person is M. Dupuis, who has long been a professor in the university of Paris. His conduct and love of labour have acquired him the general esteem; but his prevailing passion to be erudite has led him to undertake a large work on ancient theogony, and the origin of the constellations, which he cannot continue, nor publish, without offending people who here are in some credit. Not that he means any direct attack on established doctrines; but the consequences

consequences which will result from his discussions cannot always be reconciled to the prevailing opinions. Nor has he been able, by veiling these consequences, though at the peril of enfeebling the worth of his labours, to avoid displeasing some of the members of our academy of belles lettres, who have wished him to declare what he thought on the antiquity of the earth.

Thus cruelly circumstanced, as a prudent man, but honest and firm, he will gratefully accept a place in your academy, and a chair in your military school. One only impediment stands in his road. Eighteen months hence he will become what is called *emeritus**, and will have a pension on which to retreat of fourteen hundred livres (or fifty-eight pounds sterling) per annum. Whereas, should he quit his professorship now, he will lose the labour of eighteen years, by which this pension has been dearly earned. This impediment your majesty can remove. Professors, who travel by command of the king, may procure substitutes, and preserve their rank of seniority; and, should your majesty take any interest in the subject, this order you might easily obtain.

Thus would you acquire an excellent pro-

* *Emérite*—A professor who has served twenty, or a stated number of, years. T.

feſſor of grammar, and an academician remarkable for his learning, who has introduced the ſpirit of philoſophy in works of erudition, a ſpirit ſeldom found in this claſs of writers. I might propoſe other men of merit to your majeſty, but none of equal abilities. A long habit of teaching, and conduct free from reproach, in a body among whom his opinions and merit have incited jealouſy and enmity, ſeem to be advantages which few men of letters poſſeſs in ſo great a degree.

M. Beauzée, of whom your majeſty was pleaſed to ſpeak, is aged, inclined to be devout, exceedingly well pleaſed with his ſeat in the French Academy, and, though not rich, is detained here by expectations for himſelf and his children.

I hope ſoon to anſwer your majeſty's wiſhes, relative to a profeſſor of philoſophy, and belles lettres; but you are too well acquainted with the ſtate of our literature and philoſophy not to excuſe a degree of tardineſs, in the execution of this part of your commands.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, &c.

LET.

LETTER IV.

From the King.

Potfdam, May 11, 1785.

I AM greatly obliged to you for the eulogiums you have had the goodness to send me; and, to speak with all possible sincerity, I own, I think them much superior to those of M. D'Alembert, who adopted a too simple and familiar style; which but ill agrees with this kind of composition, in which elevation is required, divested of bombast. The manner of M. de Fontenelle was perhaps too satirical, since some of his eulogiums appear rather to be criticisms than panegyrics. It is my wish that France may supply subjects whose talents and genius may merit eulogiums worthy of standing beside those of their predecessors.

On which I pray, &c.

LETTER V.

From the King.

Potfdam, June 29, 1785.

I HAVE received your letter, but am waiting for your work, which is not yet arrived.

VOL. XII.

D d

I thank

I thank you for the communication, and, according to your direction, shall confine myself to the preface ; for the ignorant, like myself, are satisfied with the result of calculation, without founding the bottomless deep.

With respect to your opinion on the punishment of death, I am glad it is the same with that of the marquis Beccaria. In most countries, culprits are only punished with death for atrocious crimes. A son who kills his father, a poisoner, and other flagrant offenders, require exemplary punishment ; that fear may detain the depraved, who might otherwise be capable of similar guilt.

It is now fifty years since the torture has been banished Prussia, after the example of England*. The reason of this is most evident ; the strength or constitution of the tortured will dictate the reply. Means which may produce an avowal of truth, or of falsehood, extorted by pain, are equivocal, and too dangerous to be employed. But I know that philosophy dare not, unfortunately, walk erect in all countries.

I am exceedingly obliged to you for the per-

* Here, as in the *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*, the king seems to suppose the torture was once practised in England, which was never the case, at least under the sanction of the laws. T.

son you propose as the successor of M. Thiebault ; and, if he be willing, cheerfully accept the offer. Should we not be able to obtain the pension which he hopes to enjoy in France, one may be granted him on his retreat, when he shall no longer be capable of labour. I will, beside, write to the baron von Goltz, that he may endeavour to obtain his pension from France ; and, should he be refused, I will arrange every thing myself.

His Theogony he may publish here, according to his good pleasure. Generally speaking, I am of his opinion, and think that the planets and the globe we inhabit are infinitely more ancient than they are said to be. Of all systems, on this subject, that of the eternity of the world is the one in which least contradictions occur, and in which there is the greatest appearance of truth.

I easily conceive that time is necessary to select a professor of philosophy and belles lettres ; I therefore shall not press you on the subject, except by entreating you occasionally to recollect that a number of young persons, assembled in an academy, are eagerly waiting the instructions they want during the absence of a professor.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

From M. de Condorcet.

S I R E,

Undated.

A CAPTAIN of artillery, whose name is M. de Saint-Remi, has proposed a prize of six hundred livres (five-and-twenty pounds sterling) for the best eulogium on M. D'Alembert, submitted to the decision of the French academy. Some of his friends have joined M. de Saint-Remi, to have a medal struck. But one medal has yet been taken off, which I have thought it my duty to present to your majesty.

The French academy has received no eulogium, and the prize is consequently remitted to another year. This afflicts me. Not that the fame of M. D'Alembert suffers, but that of our literature. Most of those who generally write for the prize have more than one kind of obligation to M. D'Alembert; and, by their silence, they are liable to the reproach of ingratitude, at least, unless we may regard it as an avowal of their ignorance; but ignorance is the secret malady of our literature, and philosophy. Wanting ideas, fine phrases are studied, and an extraordinary style, in which to express com-
mon-

mon-place remarks, while paradoxes are retailed, because none but trivial truths are discovered.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

LETTER VII.

From the King.

Potsdam, August 9, 1785.

I HAVE received the medal of M. D'Alembert, which you have had the goodness to send me. I wish he had been suffered to wear his wig, as he usually did, because nothing more contributes to a just likeness than the representation of the man in his most customary dress.

It is singular that M. de Saint-Remi should appropriate a prize for the medals of philosophers, and that numerous men of letters who had obligations to M. D'Alembert should none of them think proper to write his eulogium. Nothing in this world is more scarce than gratitude; but the memory of M. D'Alembert will suffer no great loss. No praise is better than ill praise. The sunshine of literature is gone by; her thrones are vacant, and there are but few

candidates worthy of ascending them. You, who are the scholar of the great man whom we regret, alone can be his successor.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

From M. de Condorcet.

S I R E,

Paris, September 19, 1785.

I RECEIVED the letter your majesty was pleased to write but a few days since, on my return from a journey which I had made into Brittany and Berry, to examine some plans of navigation.

I hope M. Dupuis will obtain that favour from our government in behalf of which your majesty has deigned to testify some interest. The university, as a body, far from opposing, appear to be flattered by the honour conferred on M. Dupuis, which reflects honour on the university itself. The artifices of some inferior persons, envious of M. Dupuis, and who are certain never to be invited to leave their collège, have raised trifling obstacles, which the count de Vergennes may easily remove.

I

I have

I have met with a man of merit for the place of professor of belles lettres and philosophy. But, before I do myself the honour to propose him to your majesty, I must inquire further.

In France, unfortunately, we are yet far from punishing none but atrocious crimes with death. Our laws subject various species of theft to this punishment, and theft not classed according to any fixed principles, but to individual motives, and such as temporary circumstances seem to exact. Our jurisprudence is inferior to that of most of the nations of Europe; yet, at the beginning of this century, England was the only country that seemed to have some advantage over us. One of the first of your majesty's cares was to improve that branch of legislation in the monarchy you govern, and several princes have followed your example.

There is one single consideration which would prevent me from supposing the punishment of death of utility, even when confined to none but atrocious crimes; which is that these are the very crimes for the commission of which judges are most exposed to condemn the innocent. The horror which such acts inspire, and the kind of popular fury incited against those who are supposed guilty, often excite perturbation in the minds of judges and juries. Of this

there are too frequent examples in England, as well as in France.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

From the King.

Potsdam, October 14, 1785:

I AM exceedingly obliged to you for the trouble you take to procure those members for our academy of whom it is in great need. I imagine delay is necessary, as well in the choice of persons as in the prevailing on them to accept the places proposed. But I have no doubt you will succeed in procuring me able men, and I shall be under great obligations to you.

I come to the article of laws, so well explained by Beccaria, and on which you have likewise written. I am entirely of your opinion that judges ought not to be hasty in pronouncing sentence, and that to save the guilty is better than to murder the innocent; yet I think I am taught, by experience, that none of the curbs which lay restraint on men ought to be neglected. Reward and punishment are the principal engines in legislation; and there are cases
in

in which the atrocity of the crime demands rigour in the chastisement. Assassins and incendiaries, for example, deserve death; for they have assumed a tyrannical power over the lives and possessions of men. I allow that perpetual imprisonment is, in reality, a more cruel punishment than death; but not so striking as that which is performed in the presence of the multitude; for such exhibitions make a stronger impression than the accidental discourse which recalls to mind the pains endured by those who languish in prison.

I have done every thing in my power to reform the laws, and obviate the abuses of courts of justice. Would angels undertake the business they might be successful; but, having no intercourse with these gentry, we are obliged to confide in the ministry of men, who always stop much short of perfection.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R X.

From M. de Condorcet.

S I R E,

Paris, November 11, 1785.

THE bounty with which your majesty has deigned to accept some of my academic eulogiums

eulogiums emboldens me to offer those of the learned who died in the course of the year 1782, a year fatal to the academy, and which swept off a tenth of its members.

Among these eulogiums you will meet with that of Vaucanson, whom you invited to Berlin at the beginning of your reign, to which mark of your esteem he was indebted for the fortune which afterward attended him in his own country. It was you likewise who had the bounty to inform us, some time after, that M. D'Alembert was a man of genius. We shall often stand in need of more than one species of instruction from your majesty.

You have discovered rather too much familiarity of style in the latter eulogiums written by M. D'Alembert. This is an error to which the greatest writers are liable, as they grow old. Voltaire himself was not exempt from it, especially in poetry; and concealed it in prose only by his graces and the strength of his mind. It is a defect to which we are naturally inclined; nor can it be avoided but by continually watching ourselves, which vigilance is too fatiguing when our organs begin to lose their powers and pliability.

I hope soon to have the honour of submitting to your majesty's judgment the remainder
of

of the collection of the eulogiums of my illustrious friend, and dare flatter myself you will there find many noble and poignant passages, the artful and profound philosophy of which will induce you to pardon the inelegancies you may occasionally remark.

The public papers have incited false alarms. From your majesty alone all Europe expects a continuation of the tranquillity it at present enjoys. This was a glory reserved for you, and which no warlike hero before merited.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

From the King.

Potsdām, December 12, 1785.

I AM infinitely obliged to you for your last academical eulogiums. I am of your opinion that age enfeebles the style of prose writers, as it does the impetuosity of the poet ; and that we should say, with Boileau, to all old men of letters——

*Malheureux, laisse en paix ton cheval vieillissant,
De peur que tout à coup, efflanqué, sans haleine,
Il ne jette, en tombant, son maitre sur l'arène *.*

* Torment not, wretch, thy aged Pegasus ; lest, panting, and out of breath, he stumble, and leave his master in the dust.

I have

I have continued to suppose you would give yourself the trouble to procure me one M. Levesque, of whom I have heard much to his advantage, to act as philosophy professor, a place very necessary to my academy. I am obliged to you for the concern you take in my health; but at my age it is necessary to keep one foot in the stirrup, and be ready to depart when the quarter of an hour of Rabelais shall strike.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE,

Undated.

M. LEVESQUE gratefully accepts the place to which your majesty has been pleased to appoint him, and which I flatter myself he will fill with propriety. He is the disciple of Locke, and of the ancients; and to the precision of modern analysis adds the vigour of those principles which so much please us, in the moral philosophy of the Greeks and Romans. I shall never console myself should my cares ill answer the confidence with which your majesty has, for the first time, been pleased to honour me.

We

We have just lost M. Watelet, a member of the French academy, and of that of your majesty. The letters you wrote to M. D'Alembert were entrusted to him, and have been left undisposed of. They will in all probability be remitted to the duke de Nivernois. My respect for your majesty, and the interest I take in the memory of M. D'Alembert, made me think it my duty to send you this information, and to watch as attentively as I can over a trust so precious to literature, philosophy, and humanity, till your majesty shall deign to make your intentions known.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

LETTER XIII.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 6, 1786.

I AM greatly obliged to you for your cares that my correspondence with the late M. D'Alembert should not be made public. My letters only deserve to be sacrificed to Vulcan; for they are neither amusing nor interesting to the world. The age is already overloaded with bad works, without adding mine,

while the good are scarce. You have rendered me a real service by procuring me a grammarian, and another professor for the military academy. Their scholars wait their arrival with impatience; for till then their education must be neglected.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R XIV.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE,

Paris, March 26, 1786.

I HAVE incessantly used every effort that no indiscretion might be committed, relative to the correspondence of your majesty with M. D'Alembert. M. Watelet was receiver general of the finances; the chamber of accounts sealed up his papers, and the utmost that the rigour of form would permit was that the correspondence should be delivered up, in charge, to M. Nicolai, first president of that chamber, who will keep them till some one shall come and reclaim them in your majesty's name.

Should you be pleased to commit this charge to the baron de Grimm, or deign to confide the trust, so inestimable to the fame of my friend,

to me, it will no longer be exposed to various kinds of indiscretion and treachery. I will stand answerable to your majesty that it shall never leave my possession, and will take the most certain precautions that it shall not be exposed by any new accident.

M. Levesque will be ready to depart toward the end of April. A man of letters, the father of a family, and with little wealth, needs more time to arrange his affairs, though far from complicated, than other persons. The least negligence might be fatal to a small fortune.

M. Dupuis cannot leave Paris till toward the month of September; he will then become free, for it was impossible to obtain the favour for him which his talents merited, and which the interest your majesty deigned to denote would certainly have procured, if bodies of men, and especially bodies constituted like that of the university of Paris, might be guided like individuals.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XV.

From the King.

Undated.

IF any one have a just claim to my letters, written to the late M. D'Alembert, you certainly, sir, are the person. But they were not intended for publication; they are trifles as little calculated to instruct as to amuse. I therefore shall be much obliged to you if you will act in the manner you think most proper to prevent their publication. For this purpose you only need gain possession of the correspondence, a trust which cannot fall into better hands.

I have caused the travelling expences of M. Levesque to be paid at Paris. If he found nothing disagreeable in his residence at Peterfburg, where I hear he several years remained, he will discover still less difference between the climate and manners of Prussia, and those of his own country.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XVI.

From M. de Condorcet.

SIRE,

Paris, May 6, 1786.

I WAS greatly affected by the bounty with which your majesty deigned to permit me to reclaim the letters of M. D'Alembert, and to keep the precious deposit in my possession. This mark of your confidence will ever be dear to me, and inspire me with unceasing and respectful gratitude, although I cannot profit by the grant.

Your majesty will see, by the letter of the count de Vergennes, a copy of which I have the honour to inclose, that he had already disposed of this deposit, and that he thought it more prudent to divine, than to wait for, your majesty's commands. M. de Nicolai, first president of our chamber of accounts, who positively promised not to part with the letters, and who received them on that condition, did not think himself obliged to fulfil his promise.

I may be indulged in my grief at this accident. Your majesty is the only person who could remain insensible of the value of your

letters; and, interested as I am in the fame of M. D'Alembert, how could I behold the destruction of the finest monument with which his memory could be honoured, with indifference? Far from diminishing the sentiments which the bounty and confidence of your majesty have inspired, they will but be increased by my regret.

Deign, sire, to accept this homage, and suffer me eternally to devote something better than respect and admiration to your majesty.

May I venture to join the wishes of all Europe? A king and a hero who has excited so ardent an interest among foreign nations, an interest so generally and so profoundly felt, is unexampled; like the monarch in question, he is unique.

I am, &c.

Letter from M. de Vergennes to M. de Condorcet.

Verfailles, May 3, 1786.

I RECEIVED the letter which you did me the honour to write, sir, dated the first of this month, with the annexed copy of that of the king of Prussia; and it is with regret that I perceive the impossibility of gratifying your claims. Informed by persons worthy of credit
that

that the king of Prussia desired the part of his correspondence which was collected at the death of M. Watelet should not be published, and being further informed that the publication could add nothing to the glory of the monarch, considering the nature of the subjects there treated on, the most efficacious means of ascertaining at present, and to futurity, obedience to the will of his Prussian majesty was for ever to suppress that correspondence. This I did, in the presence of the first president of the chamber of accounts. I did not neglect, sir, to inform the king of Prussia of the fact, and I flatter myself he will applaud the precaution.

I have no doubt, sir, but the correspondence would have been exceedingly safe in your possession; but men are not immortal, and their intentions are not always executed by their successors.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From the King.

Potsdam, May 25, 1786.

I CONSIDER the burning of my letters as an exceedingly favourable incident, and as the

most certain means to prevent their appearance. It would have been disagreeable to me to see those letters sent into the world which were not meant to meet the eye of the public. To the forty, who are the depositories of the purity of the French language, it appertains to furnish you with perfection of every kind, such as may merit the honours conferred by the press. I know not what is become of the two professors for my military school. The young people remain too long without instruction, although I have agreed to their double pensions, expences of travelling, &c. I therefore cannot comprehend what stops them, and I own a longer delay might tend to injure the opinion I had formed of them ; but this will not diminish the obligations I have to you, and I feel the value of the trouble you have taken in the business.

On which I pray, &c. &c.

*End of the Correspondence between FREDERIC II. and
M. de CONDORCET.*

L E T T E R S

O F

F R E D E R I C H.

T O

M. G R I M M.

THE

LIBRARY

OF

THE

UNIVERSITY

OF

THE

STATE

OF

NEW

YORK

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

L E T T E R S

OF

F R E D E R I C II.

TO

M. G R I M M.

L E T T E R I.

From the King.

1773.

I HAVE had asthmatic fits that sometimes have made me ill enough, in which state I find myself at present. I shall therefore satisfy myself with acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and of those by which it is accompanied, without entering into any further detail. Have the goodness to send the inclosed according to their address.

On which I pray, &c.

E c 4

L E T.

L E T T E R II.

From the King.

Potfdam, February 25, 1774.

YOUR letter, of the fifth of February, arrived the day before yesterday. I thank you for the interest you take in what relates to me, and my relations of the christian calendar. My saint does not approve the application of the remark of Jean Jacques, which, spoken of the orchestra of Paris, may be judicious. Be it as it will, we must profit by the fathers.

What you tell me of your conversations with her Imperial majesty, relative to myself, flatters and interests me. Nothing can delight me more than to be remembered by that great princess, for whom I have infinite veneration. I have discoursed with you on her talents, grand views, elevation of soul, and that bounty with which she welcomes those who have the happiness to approach her. You have had time to recollect and verify all I have said. I easily conceive how great must be your regret, and that you will no where find any objects equal to the things of which you have been a spectator. I shall see you with pleasure, as you pass through Berlin, and shall converse more at large on a subject concern-

concerning which I have so many reasons to be interested.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R III.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 19, 1782.

WHEN I address myself to the baron of Grimmgribber*, colonel of the Préobraſchinſky guards of her Imperial majeſty of all the Ruſſias, I think myſelf certainly able to prove the definition of the title, both by public act and patent; but I do not underſtand the title of *suffer-pain*†, nor the tranſlation of a Ruſſian word which I cannot comprehend, conſequently, to which I can annex no clear idea. With reſpect to the epithet *breast-plate*‡, I by no means think it ſuitable to the worthy baron; unleſs indeed we might ſay that whoever is under the protection of the colonel may conſider that protection as the ægis of Minerva, which will render all its poſſeſſors invulnerable. Permit me therefore to ſubſtitute the ægis inſtead of the

* *A M. de la Grimaliere.*

† *Souffre-douleur.* ‡ *Plaſtron.*

breast-

breast-plate, and to regard you as the protector of the duke of Saxe-Gotha in France ; you who have protected the young Romanzows, amid all the temptations of youth, and who, in some sort, may be compared to the cardinals who are the protectors of France and Germany, at Rome. In like manner you protect the interests of the great Catharine in the empire of the Gauls. .

M. Grimmgribber will have the kindness to perceive, from what I have said, how far I am from hurling my darts at him, and how much I recommend myself to his puissant patronage. I should, no doubt, have answered him sooner, had I not been attacked by a dozen diseases at once, which have deprived me of the use of all my members. I have been exceedingly chagrined to hear he was so near my frontiers, and to be deprived of the beatific vision. Ariosto has said, though mountains cannot, men may meet ; so that I do not despair but that some happy influence of my fortunate star may, one day, procure me the satisfaction to see and admire this baron once again.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T.

LETTER IV.

From the King.

Potsdam, November 11, 1783.

YOU may well imagine how much I was affected by the death of D'Alembert, especially as I supposed him attacked by a chronic disease, but not by one which directly threatened his life. I doubt France will not soon repair his loss. It is not wonderful that sickness had lately enfeebled his mind; for death, by attacking all the organized parts of our bodies, must, while effecting their destruction, deprive them of their activity. I am, however, obliged to you for having communicated this melancholy intelligence, nor could I forbear saying to myself—“We must either die, or live to see others die;” “there is no medium.”

On which I pray, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R V.

From the King.

Potsdam, December 16, 1783.

I AM indebted to you for your cares to prevent the publication of my correspondence with D'Alembert, which various reasons have led me to wish. In the first place there was nothing worthy of publication; and, again, the reputation of M. D'Alembert is so well established that it has no need either of my support or my suffrage.

I cannot but confess how melancholy it is to see all the persons whom I have esteemed die, one after the other; and that affliction is increased because it does not depend upon myself to die, or to see others die. These are all effects of secondary causes, which, by their different combinations, are productive of very dreadful events. True it is I have erected monuments to Algarotti and D'Argens, whom I greatly loved, and who long lived with me, and I am another cenotaph indebted to the honour of Copernicus, which I propose to erect in Prussia.

Should French literature produce any thing
curious,

curious, you will do me a pleasure by communicating it, without troubling yourself with the subaltern classes of the literati, for whom I care but little.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

From the King.

Potfdam, May 11, 1785.

I AM much obliged to you for the letter of M. de Condorcet, which you sent me, and an answer to which I return, requesting you to deliver it. The fine arts and belles lettres seem to undergo the same fate in Europe as they formerly did at Rome, after the great Augustan age, when mediocrity was the successor of genius. After having carried the belles lettres to the height of possible perfection, the nation, as if satiated with such masterly writings, began to be disgusted with them; the language, which had attained a certain degree of purity, was degraded by far-fetched phrases and terms; the severe and acrid spirit of philosophy opposed the effervescence of imagination; and genius, confined within too narrow limits, no longer was fruitful in great productions.

I

I thank

I thank you, old as I am, for having kept my birth day; I am but too aged; but each must live till that period when the thread of follies which fate has condemned him to commit in this world shall be cut. According to the deceased prince of Deuxponts, salvation is only at Paris; consequently, those who live elsewhere do but vegetate in purgatory, or in limbo. Should you think proper to contradict this opinion, you may seek satisfaction of the late prince of Deuxponts; and, if you yourself be too feeble to attack that family, you need but join the emperor, with whom you were at Spa. He will willingly assist you with his whole powers, that you may gain your cause.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

From the King.

Potsdam, August 9, 1785.

I RETURN you thanks for the medal of M. D'Alembert, which you have conveyed to me; but could have wished the likeness had been better preserved. He might, however, have been greatly changed in a space of twenty years, during which I had not seen him. I

have never heard a word of the officer of artillery, whom you mention to me; but it is not surprising that a nation so polished as France should send to enlighten barbarians, and communicate parcels of her immense magazine of knowledge. The Turks ought to admire their artillery legislator, nor can I suspect they will treat him with violence*.

On which I pray, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

From the King.

Potfdam, October 24, 1785.

I AM much obliged to you for the letter which you have conveyed to me from M. de Condorcet. Inclosed is an answer which you will be kind enough to send. I scarcely could enjoy the apparition of some Frenchmen in this country, and, among others, of M. de la Fayette. I have passed four weeks in company with the gout, which is more disagreeable than that of these gentlemen. I congratulate M. de la Grimmgriber on the augmentation which the empress of Russia is making in her troops; because the na-

* The baron de Tott is no doubt the officer in question, T. tural

tural consequence will, no doubt, be an advance of rank ; and, perhaps, in the war which is preparing against the Porte, it may fall to your lot to take Constantinople, at the head of a victorious army. I shall be a spectator of these high deeds of arms, and, should not the weakness of age lay too potent shackles upon me, I intend to celebrate these miracles of our times, and to rank your name with that of Alexander and Cæsar ; and that of the Autocratrix of all the Russias with those of Jupiter and Neptune.

On which I pray, &c.

End of the Letters of FREDERIC II. to M. GRIMM,

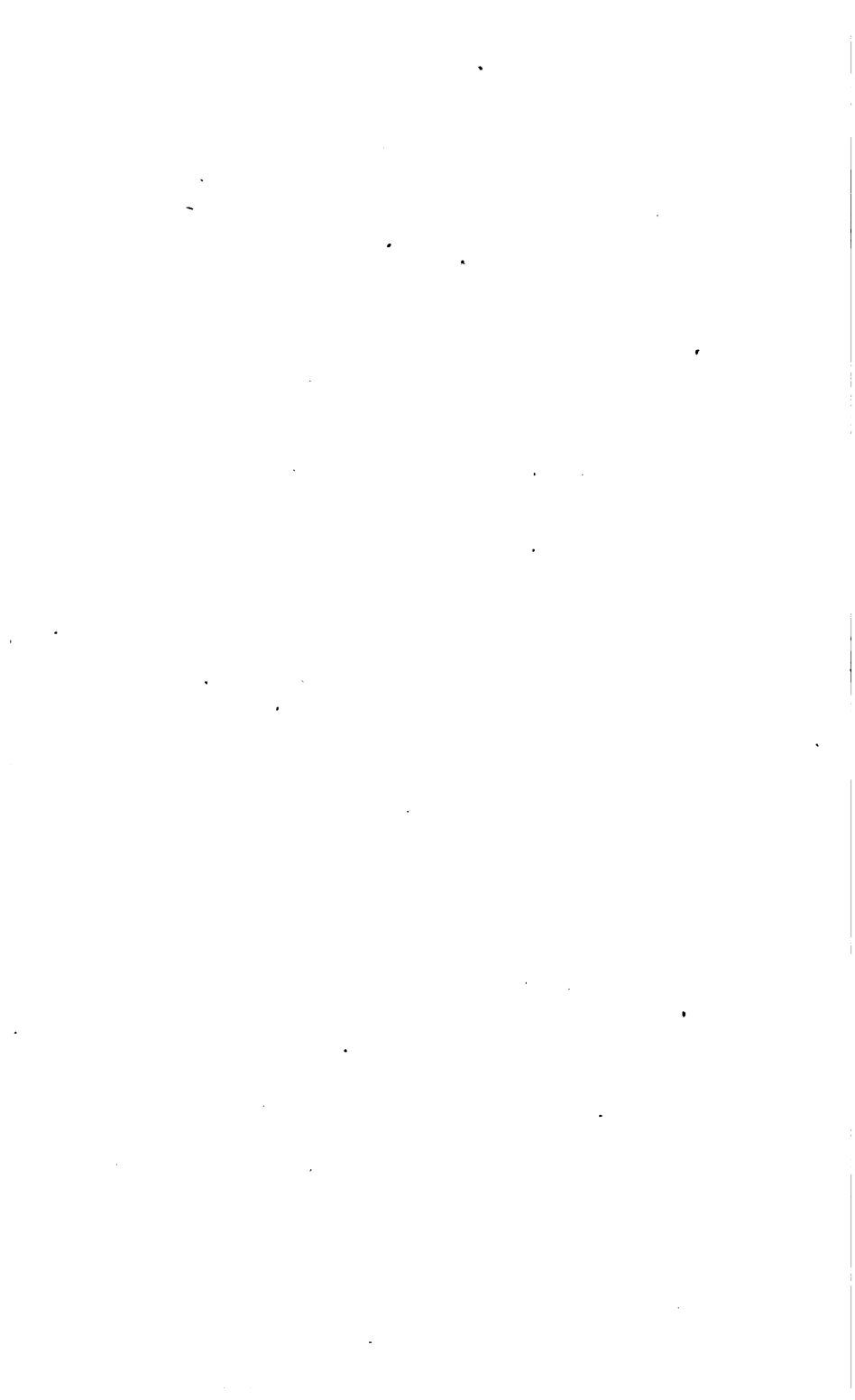
L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

AND

M. D' A R G E T.



L E T T E R S

B E T W E E N

F R E D E R I C II.

A N D

M. D' A R G E T.

L E T T E R I.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Berlin, May 20, 1749.

I HAVE, this moment, received letters from Paris, which I have the honour to lay before your majesty. They contain literary intelligence, and details relative to Voltaire, of which and whom I imagine your majesty will not be sorry to be informed.

M. D'Arnaud writes me word that the journey of M. de Voltaire may probably be delayed till the month of September, the time when madame du Chatelet will be brought to bed. He

F f 2

likewise

likewise mentions to me a new work, in one volume, which the connoisseurs hold in great esteem; its title is *Voyage Pittoresque**, or, The Beauties of Sculpture, Architecture, and Painting, in Paris. Is it your majesty's pleasure that I should write to the sieur D'Arnaud to send you the book? Not a moment is lost in the printing of the poem, but I fear it cannot be finished before the end of the month, though I hoped at first it might have been; because, instead of twenty-two sheets, it will contain twenty-eight; the reason of which is, some pages must be printed rather wider, that the end of each book may correspond with the back of the leaf; otherwise the vignettes and tail-pieces would be improperly placed, and the work would be deprived of beauty. I assure your majesty, I exert my whole abilities that the edition may be worthy of the work; but it is an attempt of great difficulty, beyond my talents, and those of the printer. I have received a letter from M. Petit, who is continually following the *Soubrette*†, but he despairs of inducing her to accept seven hundred German crowns. She is said to be handsome and witty. Perhaps your majesty may have

* A Picturesque Tour, &c.

† An actress is so called who plays the part of chambermaids. T.

the goodness to grant her eight hundred crowns, should she absolutely refuse to come for less. I wait your orders on the subject, that I may send the sieur Petit a decisive answer.

The bookseller Neaulme has at length returned me an answer, concerning the edition of Ovid. He thinks the Love Elegies, those written in Pontus, the Art of Love, Love's Remedy, the Fasti, and the Tristia, if collected into one volume, agreeable to your majesty's commands, will be too thick and of a disagreeable size. He proposes to divide the six into two volumes of an equal bulk ; the letter press and size to be similar to the Horace. His demand is four hundred and thirty German crowns, half in advance ; being, as he says, incapable otherwise of undertaking the work.

I entreat your majesty to inform me of your intentions, on this subject.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R II.

From the King.

Potfdam, May 24, 1749.

YOUR letter was safely delivered, and I thank you for the communication of your literary intelligence. I wish you would send to Paris for the Memoirs of Sir William Temple, the letters of Cardinal D'Offat, the Essay on Commerce by Mélon, and his Political Romance. Send likewise for Cæsar's Commentaries, the beautiful London edition in folio, and the Dictionary of the French Academy in quarto. I wish you to execute this commission carefully. When I demand any book, let it be understood that the most beautiful, correct, and valuable edition is to be chosen. Nothing can be more clear, more simple. Men like Thiriot can only suppose the contrary. I will have no book on the paintings in Paris, for I fear temptation.

I am obliged to you for your attention to my poem. It will owe all its beauty to the editor. With respect to the *Soubrette* of Paris, if she will have none of my money, I shall laugh at her airs. The truth is, I do not think proper to
increase

increase the sum set apart for the use of the comedians. Actors are like the sea, which receives tribute from a thousand sources without ever having enough, or ever being more full.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R I I I .

From M. D'Arget.

Berlin, November, 1749.

I DARE not mention to your majesty the affliction I feel, for the death of my wife ; it is great beyond expression ; and should God, time, and your majesty's bounty, produce no effect on me, it will render my life one continuation of pain, and misery. I do not yield without a struggle ; but, should the remedies I try deceive my wishes, I hope your majesty's humanity will permit me to go, conceal my tears in eternal retirement, and leave some one more fortunate, and less sorrowful, than myself, the happiness of serving so good and worthy a master, in the manner he deserves to be served.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

From the King.

Potsdam, November 10, 1749.

DO not abandon yourself to grief. Act reasonably, and you will then remember that we are not immortal, that life is short, and that it is not worth our while to afflict ourselves, during the short time we have to live. Accidents are our masters, and for a philosopher to murmur against the laws of Nature, or a christian against the will of Providence, is to render both philosopher and christian criminal. Recollect, heaven has only taken a part of what it gave; and to condemn all which still is left is to do heaven wrong. You have a son, whom it is your duty to educate, and properly introduce to the world.

Your affliction is ineffectual; the dead are ignorant of it, and the living, after the first fits of sorrow, require you to prescribe just limits to its course. Instead of yielding to grief, endeavour to divert your attention. As soon as you have executed the business in hand, come hither. I will require nothing of you, except that you should endeavour to relieve your mind, by
recrea-

recreation. The fate of man is to be born and die; and whoever is astonished, when such accidents happen, proves that he has never reasoned on his own condition. Drive the object which overwhelms you from your sight; look at any other thing in nature. Montagne has very well remarked that there are two handles to all things on earth, one good, one bad; and we are affected according to the manner in which we lay hold. I am sensible of the weight of your grief, but I cannot but imagine you have understanding enough to gain time, so as to find consolation. Should we not be madmen were we to despair because yesterday must never return? Many a day and many a morrow must pass away, none of which shall ever more be seen. This is the very moment in which you ought to shew yourself a man, and vanquish your feelings. Scripture informs us that he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city. Adieu, my good D'Arget; may my sermon make some impression on your mind, and restore it to that calm state of which it certainly has great need!

FREDERIC.

P. S. I have sent you two passages, which according to my calculation will make five pages of letter press; the other five will soon follow;

follow ; but, after reading my poem again, I have detected so many faults, and things necessary to be corrected, that I am determined to make a new and more perfect edition, of all the pieces contained in the first volume.

L E T T E R V.

From the King.

Potfdam, 1759.

I RETURN you my epistle with all the corrections made. I have left the word *bar-cela* to see what Voltaire will say to it. We must indulge him in the pleasure of detecting some inaccuracy. Be kind enough at present to have it copied, and if possible return it me to-morrow. Alas ! Poor D'Arget ! Woe to the secretary of a poet ! And accursed, and damned, of God be he who continually versifies. * *

* * * *. †

† Short passages will occasionally be omitted, as in the above instance ; but elsewhere, as here, asterisks will be inserted, to denote such omissions, and to direct those who may wish to examine, from the original, why they have been made. T,

L E T.

LETTER VI.

From the King.

April, 1752.

TRULY, my good D'Arget, I imagine I shall behold a Mamamouchi * when you return. God knows what strange ideas enter the heads of your countrymen ! The order of St. John of Latran is so much despised, in Italy, that it may be bought for forty crowns. Surely it is little worth your while to make yourself a Mamamouchi. A much shorter way will be to cut off six locks of hair, from the crown of your head ; the world would laugh less at a tonsured pate than at an order which confers no dignity.

By what I can perceive, your French physicians perfectly understand the art of emptying the purse. You will return to this place as you left it ; and I, in my ignorance, dare assure you exercise only can effect your cure.

Voltaire has behaved here like a knave, a

* This is the term employed by the king, who often took pleasure in the use of uncommon words. It signifies buffoon ; though it here alludes to the folly of the title of knight, as coveted by M. D'Arget. The Italians say—*Fare alle mammùcce*—To play, like children, with baubles. T. consummate

consummate cheat, I have very plainly told him what he deserves. He is a wretch, and I blush for human genius, when a man who has so much can be so full of malevolence. I recommend myself to thy remembrance, my gentle Sir-knight! Yet, for God's sake, if thou dost make thyself a Mamamouchi, send me previous notice; otherwise, when I meet thee, I might die with laughing, which would not be decent.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R VII.

From the King.

Potsdam, June, 1752,

I HAVE received your letter, and entreat you not to indulge your mind in melancholy impressions. You will be received here in the manner in which you was dismissed; nay I shall be even good enough to pity, instead of laughing at you, for having so unseasonably expended your money in France. I will not even make you recollect that I predicted every thing that has happened; nay, should you have

become a Mamamouchi of St. John of Latran, I will not so much as laugh, provided I be first informed of the circumstance.

Adieu, my good D'Arget, I am going to the opera.

FREDERIC

L E T T E R VIII.

From the King.

Potsdam, July 6, 1752.

YOURS is a very gloomy letter, my good D'Arget. Cure yourself at once of the chimeras which afflict you. I protest no person has spoken of you, nor has vented any calumnies against you. It is only black blood which circulates slowly in the lower abdomen, and which occasions such heavy fumes to ascend to your brain. Stay therefore in France till September.

You will never believe me. I told you that the air of Paris was no other than the air of a great city; that physicians there are as great empirics as they are here; and that there is no remedy for you except exercise. But you never take my word till you are brought to repentance.

You

You will return with an empty purse and a sple-
netic mind ; and, to your great consolation, will
be taught that, not the hæmorrhoids, but, an
inveterate scurvy renders your life wretched.
This is what we get by travelling.

Adieu. Flutter about, take a few drugs, and
chuse *Paris* *, rather than Vernage, or Astruc,
for your physician, Harlequin for your apothecary,
and Scaramouch for your bather.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R IX.

From the King.

Potsdam, July 31, 1752.

YOU send me plenty of the dreams of
spleen, my good D'Arget. No man has spoken
either good or ill of you to me, and I learn from
yourself that you have sold some plate. I lived
in security, nor ever once suspected the business.
Banish therefore the visions which embitter your

* *La Paris*—I do not understand what is meant by chusing *la Paris* for a physician. *La ville de Paris*, but not *la Paris*, is proper when speaking of the city. It may be the name of a person ; or it may be an allusion intelligible only to the king and his correspondent. T.

life,

life, and learn gaiety and content from your countrymen.

You mention two persons to me, of the first of whom only I have any knowledge; the author of a book intituled *Des Mœurs*. I leave the choice of them to you. Take him who is the most docile, gay, and equal-tempered, and offer him the place of La Mettrie, with the annexed conditions, such as you know them to be.

Poor Maupertuis is not well. I wish he may recover, but I begin to doubt. Endeavour to become intimate with D'Alembert, and try whether he will nibble at our bait. Inform me what you think on the subject, that I may know whether any thing can be done. * * * * *

* * * * *

Recollect what I told you, concerning physicians; and learn that, in this country, where the air is said to be so bad, an old woman, a few days since, a French refugee, died here at the age of ninety-eight; and a man at the age of one hundred and two; but, since so the faculty have determined, remain at Paris till the month of September, only take care to keep your hand on your purse-strings. Astruc and Sennaca love money better than their patients.

I am much obliged to the gentlemen who, you tell me, interested themselves concerning
my

my individual person, without knowing me. Had they conversed with me but one quarter of an hour, my fame would have vanished! This it is to be known only by report. Perhaps, were the beautiful Helena again to make her appearance, instead of adoring her, men would pelt her with rotten apples. Perhaps, had we conversed with the shoe-maker of Trajan, he would have robbed the world of a part of the high opinion which it has entertained of that emperor. Ah! My dear D'Arget, such are we mortals! We are dazzled by rising fame. A name of too much renown is a most wearisome burthen.

* * * * *

L E T T E R X.

From the King.

Potsdam, August, 1752.

I AM supplied with a reader, my dear D'Arget; I have no need therefore of Morand, Monterif, or Mouhy. I shall wear out my own ears sooner than the lungs of the abbé de Prades,
and

and that is all I want. * * * * *

* * * * *

We must oppose pain by fortitude, and expel melancholy by the aid of mirth. Remember my advice, and practise it as much as you can.

Poor Maupertuis is not well. I have reason to fear we shall lose him. I know none but D'Alembert who can fill his place. See what is to be done. I do not think it is his humour to confess; and he might lead an agreeable and happy life at Berlin. Try, sound the shore, take out your compass, and make a lunge at a venture.

La Touche is arrived, and is infinitely more agreeable to us than the mylord. God forgive me, but I have an aversion to the English race, of which I know not how to correct myself. The sins of the monarch are visited upon the people. I shall depart in a few days for Silesia, and hope to see you here at my return. How precious is health! And how much does it cost the art of pharmacy to * * * * *
Vale.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R X I.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Paris, September 18, 1752.

I F ever unfortunate mortal might with reason complain, that mortal certainly am I. I am penetrated by your majesty's bounty, which I have put to the test. You granted me the favour of allowing me to come here for the recovery of my health, and here have I been almost six months. Pain, assiduity, and expence, have all been submitted to, in order to succeed; but all to no purpose. I am not any better. My malady, I am assured, is a mixture of scurvy and virus; and the physicians ask till the month of January, to eradicate it by mild but certain remedies, which must be aided by the air of this place, to produce their entire effect. The physician, who is willing to undertake my cure, does not require payment till he has succeeded. My relations press me to commit myself to his care; and so will have it, under pain of disinherittance. My friends solicit me; the love of life almost imposes it on me as a law; for, it is affirmed, I shall not live two years, should I re-
turn

turn with my malady; but I have not nor could I promise any thing. I depend on your majesty; and that much more from attachment, and respectful gratitude, than from duty.

My situation is afflicting. I wish to live and I fear to displease your majesty, and to weary your kindness and patience. The public is unacquainted, and perhaps you yourself, sire, are ignorant how much those are attached to you, who have the happiness to know you; yet were I to risk my life to gratify this attachment, instead of attributing it to the true motive, it would rather be placed to the account of interest and ambition. I therefore repeat to your majesty, I entreat you to suppose yourself in my situation, to fix my irresolution, for suspense is the severest pang of the soul; and even venture to ask your advice, as that of the most enlarged mind with which I am acquainted, and your commands as those of the best master on earth. They shall be executed without repugnance, whether it be to remain here, should you still have the goodness to grant me this last favour, or to return as soon as I shall have received your majesty's orders, from performing of which neither the difficulty of roads, weather, my feeble health, nor in fine any other cause, shall deter me. I will conform to the will of your majesty; and, if I

perish in the attempt, I shall at least perish, according to my manner, in the bed of honour.

I have taken such steps, respecting M. D'Alembert, as were prescribed to me, by your majesty. He feels the whole worth of the place you intended to bestow on him, for which he is penetrated with gratitude; but the love of his country, the enjoyment of absolute liberty, the fear of losing the intercourse he maintains with his friends, and a delicate constitution, which, according to him, can only exist in his native air, are all motives which are victorious over the splendid dignity that awaits him at Berlin. But it is a debt I owe, to him and truth, to assure your majesty that his only regret is his inability to approach your person; at which I am the more chagrined, because he merits this distinction more than any man. His extent of knowledge, the qualities of his heart, and the gifts of his understanding, are uncommon; but he is a philosopher, who is faithful to his principles, and who knows no other wealth than that of life and liberty. Such in fine as your majesty would have been, had it not been the will of fate that you should be born to ascend a throne. His income is exceedingly moderate, and he faithfully promises himself to repair for enjoyment into Prussia, should the ill temper of the
theolo-

theologians ever render it an act of necessity to quit the country he loves, and in which he is beloved. He feels that under your laws only should a philosopher take refuge. This is the opinion of all thinking people.

I lately dined, at the house of M. de la Tour, with a man whom I saw penetrated with all the sentiments so justly due to your majesty. His name is M. von Frey-Chapelle, formerly vice grand equerry* to the king of England, in Hanover. I believe he would think himself happy in your majesty's service, if he could there find proper employment. He appears to me a man of sense and merit, conversant in horses, and in the superintendence of a stud. People, who are his friends, have informed me that many places have been offered him in various courts; but he would not accept of any which might gratify that kind of resentment which is entertained against him at Hanover. He is a Roman catholic; but he appears to me to be an unprejudiced man, and to possess an infinite fund of zeal, and admiration, for your majesty. These have been the source of his intimacy with M. de la Tour, who openly professes being entirely devoted to you.

* *Vice grand-ecuyer*. I believe this signifies the same as—
Deputy-master of the horse. T.

I wait here with obedience, resignation, and impatience, for the commands which it shall please your majesty to give, concerning the things contained in this long letter, for which I entreat your majesty's patience, and indulgence.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

From the King.

September, 1752.

YOU perceive, my good D'Arget, how various are the accidents of this world * * * *

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* * * * * I have no need of your Hanover groom; but I bawl with might and main for a mathematician, who has no need of me. Did that man know the project we have formed for the progress of human reason, I am persuaded he would come here to join some adepts, in the refinement of that ore.

I am

I am exceedingly well satisfied with my little anathematized heretic, who serves me as a reader. Potsdam will truly become the rendezvous of the excommunicated. Admire the ways of Providence! The thunder strikes not here (in this wicked place) yet its bolts descend on holy places, and on churches!

Credulous D'Arget! Make trial of the science of empirics at Paris, of the virtues of your natal air, and of the potency of St. Genevieve! Satisfy the wishes of signora Martha, Maria, and Salome! But I fear you will return as you went. My opinion still continues the same, concerning your disease. *Exercise*—and you will be well.

Adieu. May the prayers of an excommunicated and rash heretic, who smells of schism, who advances ill advised, erroneous, and blasphemous propositions, soften the compassion of nature in your behalf, and restore you a portion of that gaiety which, in your country, degenerates into folly.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XIII.

From the King.

Potfdam, April, 1753.

I VERY much fear, my poor D'Arget, that you have reason to repent of your journey into France. You have passed through the hands of some demi-dozen quacks, who have completely ruined your health. Your only disease was obstruction in the abdomen, which drugs of every kind, and all of a contrary tendency, have increased; and, if I may judge from what you tell me, I greatly fear your lungs are affected; in which case, there is little hope I shall ever see you again.

I am not astonished that the quarrel between our sages should be the subject of conversation at Paris. Voltaire is the most malignant lunatic I ever was acquainted with. He is excellent only in his writings. It is impossible you should imagine all the duplicity, and infamous knavery, of which he has here been guilty. My indignation rises to perceive that so much wit, and so much knowledge, should not render men better. I have taken the part of Maupertuis, because he is a very worthy man; and because the other
had

had endeavoured to effect his ruin ; but I did not second his revenge in the manner he wished. A little superabundance of vanity rendered Maupertuis too sensible of the manœuvres of a monkey ; that, after having been whipped, ought to have been despised.

For my own part, I continue my usual train, and am very well satisfied with my little heretic* ; who, let the doctors of the Sorbonne say what they please, is a good fellow. I employ myself as usual, in study.

Should you see the fat marquis, inform him that I still interest myself concerning him ; and that our rude good sense, as Montesquieu says, renders our nation constant in its attachments.

Adieu, my poor D'Arget. I very much fear I shall receive ill news of your health ; I nevertheless with I may be deceived.

FREDERIC.

* The abbé de Prades. T.

LET-

L E T T E R XIV.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Paris, June 11, 1753.

I RATHER consulted my zeal, and my courage, than my strength, when I hoped to return to the feet of your majesty. My ill health still continues, attended with the most alarming symptoms. The disease alternately attacks the region of the vesica and the lungs; and I am well convinced that I am, for life, reduced to this unfortunate situation. I had discontinued medicine, that I might recover sufficient strength for my journey; but the malignant humours which overcome me would not admit of any interval of attack, and I am threatened with the worst accidents, should I quit my native air, which is the only resource that remains for me, in my present cruel condition. I myself feel that here only can I perhaps continue to vegetate a few years; and I see myself obliged to renounce the happiness of again appearing in your majesty's presence. Nor must I, by new delay, weary your patience; nay it makes my heart continually tremble, lest I should have too much abused this patience already,

Let

Let your majesty deign to recollect the favours you have heaped upon me, during almost eight years, the honourable manner in which I was placed under your majesty, and the hopes with which I might flatter myself; recollect also the reality of my devotedness, by the knowledge you have of my character, and you will then perceive that the love of life, and the hope of prolonging it, are the sole reasons which could induce me to sacrifice advantages which so entirely gratified my feelings, and my ambition.

Your majesty would pity me, did you see the situation in which I am, while writing this letter. By how many thoughts am I distracted! I cannot support the idea of for ever losing your favours. Deign to continue them to me! I will not cease to deserve them; I will ever appertain to your majesty by my prayers, my attachment, and my gratitude; and, should but my health recover stability, I will eagerly repair again to devote my services to my royal master. I wish not to cease to be your servant, but in ceasing to live; and would only live by your benefits. Such happiness would crown all the hopes I now can entertain. God is my witness those hopes all centre in your majesty. I know too well your goodness of heart not to flatter myself you will not forsake me; or not to depend at least
on

on your protection and support, on such occasions when I shall implore you to grant them. To remember, and betoken bounty for, a servant whose misfortunes tear him from you, were worthy of your majesty.

I throw myself at your majesty's feet, to entreat you will be pleased to grant me a dismissal, correspondent to the satisfaction which you have been pleased to testify of my services, and which will be my witness that I am not overwhelmed with disgrace; for this my zeal, my fidelity, and my attachment, have never merited.

I renew my protestations to your majesty, and, with those sentiments, and that most profound respect, which to the last moment of life I shall entertain,

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V ,

From the King.

June 26, 1753.

I AM sorry, my good D'Arget, that your disease will not allow you to return to my service. I send you the dismissal, which I never should have sent had you not asked it yourself.

self. You will always find me ready to give you pleasure, in every thing which depends on me. I wish with all my heart you may recover, and I thank you very sincerely for all the services which you have done me.

FREDERIC.

P. S. I would willingly leave you my bundle of follies, but that they might take wing after your death; and you know how much I fear to pass for a poet.

L E T T E R XVI.

From the King.

Potsdam, December 1, 1753.

I RECEIVED the letter which you were kind enough to write, on the 7th of the last month, and am exceedingly sensible of the attention which you so eagerly indicate. Whatever comes from you I receive with pleasure; and you may be certain of the remembrance and esteem in which I hold you, notwithstanding your absence.

It will depend on yourself to send for your son, and give him a good education, under your own inspection. You have only to make such arrangements

rangements as you think proper, for I shall never prevent him from being restored to your tenderness.

I shall very willingly think myself indebted to you if, sometimes, according to your convenience, you will send intelligence of what is passing; in which case you have only to address your letters to the marquis D'Argens.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XVII.

From the King.

Berlin, January 7, 1754.

I AM well persuaded of the sincerity of your good wishes to me, and of your attachment to my person. You lived with me long enough to make me acquainted with the goodness of your heart, by which you have always merited my esteem. I most truly wish you better health.

You will give me pleasure by aiding my agent in his inquiries after a dancer; but, should you find one, do not conclude any agreement, till you have first written to me.

Drive melancholy away, and endeavour to enable yourself to enjoy life and the world, which

perhaps is more attached to you than you to it,
&c.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XVIII.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 25, 1754.

THE gout, my dear D'Arget, is a great evil, but the spleen is the worst of evils. Should the gout therefore relieve the liver, to have the gout will not be an evil, but a good. This is a trifling tribute which must be paid, at an age which incessantly removes us from the moment of our origin, and drags us forward toward that of destruction. But, should I continue to write in this tone, you might mistake my letter for an extract from the quatrains of Pibrac*.

You have given me great pleasure, by sending me news from Paris, and of the poet. His

* Gui du Faur, lord of Pibrac, a famous magistrate and statesman under Charles IX. and Henry III. of France, wrote quatrains, or poetical moral sentences of four lines, which were once so highly esteemed that they were translated into the Greek, Latin, Turkish, Arabic, and Persian languages; and children learned them by rote. T.

character

character consoles me for the regret I feel at his superiority of understanding.

The winter has been a dreadful one. Well have you divined that I shall remain shut up in my chamber; where, to own the truth, I shall be more solitary than I could wish to be. Our society is dispersed, gone to the devil. The madman is in Switzerland, the Italian is boring a hole through the moon, Maupertuis is on his truckle bed, and D'Argens has hurt his little finger, so that he wears his arm in a scarf, as if he had been wounded by a cannon ball, before Philippsburg. Such is the news of Potsdam. Ask me for nothing more. I live with my books, and converse with the people of the Augustan age. I shall soon be as little acquainted with the living as the late Jordan was with the streets of Berlin.

It is here reported you are going to war; if so, I shall be sorry for your marine. Three years at least are necessary, advantageously to face that of England. But, be it war or peace, in America, the fire has still far to travel before it can reach our frontiers.

Adieu, my good D'Arget. I will not apostrophise you with a solemn—I pray to God to take you into his holy keeping.

L E T T E R XIX.

From the King.

Potfdam, March 23, 1754.

I THANK you for the dancers you have procured for me. You know the welcome I always give to French officers, who happen to visit Prussia; you therefore ought not to doubt but that M. de Quincy, of whom you speak to me in your letter, will be received with like favour, and that I shall grant him the usual protection and kind treatment.

Send me intelligence of Voltaire whenever you obtain any, be it of what kind it will. I am much obliged to you for your attention to afford me marks of being still attached to me, &c.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XX.

From the King.

Potfdam, April 1, 1754.

I AM very sorry, my poor D'Arget, to hear you are continually in bed. You see it is

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H h

not

not the climate which is the cause of this, but the disease you bear about you.

I want a couple more dancers, a man and woman. Cannot you, in Paris, find some agreeable huffy, with wicked eyes, a pleasing face, and an elegant shape, who shall be willing to come and caper on our Berlin stage? If you can you will confer an additional obligation on me.

Would you believe that Voltaire, after all the tricks he has played me, has made attempts to return? But Heaven preserve me from him! He is good to read, but a dangerous companion.

The marquis, here present, sends his compliments to you; and, for my own part, I assure you that, during life, I shall more highly esteem the qualities of your heart than all the dazzling ones of the wits. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XXI.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Vincennes, April 27, 1754.

THE happiness of testifying my zeal and devotedness to your majesty will make me work miracles; and, perhaps, to find a dancer such

as

as your majesty requires would be nothing less than miraculous. When such girls are handsome, Paris is their Peru, which they never will forsake. Be it as it may, the interests of your theatre are entrusted to the sieur Petit, your majesty's agent; and, I dare assure you, no man is more capable than he is of these kind of negotiations. It is but just he should have all the honour, since he has all the trouble; and he has given me to understand that to endeavour to second him would but be to interfere in his business.

A watchmaker of the name of Caën, I understand, is immediately to depart for Berlin. He is an excellent workman, and your majesty has in him made a good acquisition.

I am not surprised at the attempts of M. de Voltaire to return to your majesty; his understanding is too great not to act rationally once in his life. But your repugnance, sire, is equally well founded, since he has had the misfortune essentially to fail in his duty to you. What your majesty has been pleased to write to me, on the subject, has given me the greater pleasure because it had been reported, here, that you had shewn some inclination to see him again. I even know that the president * has been in dreadful

* M. de Maupertuis. T.

apprehensions. If I be not mistaken, some very singular things will one day be known, on this subject. We are at present kept in darkness; but, be it as it may, the glory of your majesty is, and ever will be, triumphant over all.

Man is authorised in amusing himself with agreeable things, when he is continually effecting that which is useful; and princes will be judged, by sages and by posterity, according to the latter. Why must not *L'Épître à votre Esprit**, fire, be given to the world? Your majesty ought to indulge its publication clandestinely, since it would but be to publish the best of possible apologies.

It is asserted here that M. de Voltaire will pass the summer at Plombières, and that he will afterwards take up his residence at Strasburg. He has made some attempts to go to Luneville†. But all those who are dependant on this country, will never yield to any thing, which may appear to depart from the particular respect in which every person in France delights to hold your majesty.

It is true, sire, that my health is very much deranged. The winter has been too severe, and too long; every kind of *climate* has assem-

* The epistle to your understanding.

† The residence of Stanislaus, nominal king of Poland. T.
bled

bled here *, and no one knows better than your majesty how much the soul of sensibility is affected, by all surrounding objects. This unfortunate gift of Nature is not weakened in me; and the recollection of your majesty's favours often assails my heart and mind, in the most touching manner. The kindness with which you deign to continue them, fire, redoubles such feelings. Let me venture to entreat your majesty not to withdraw your gracious proofs. I continually depend indubitably on the protection which you have pleased to promise me, and on your support do I found my greatest hopes. It is natural to your majesty's goodness of heart to be pleased that I should owe my happiness to you, even at this distance; and by holding it thus its value will be doubled.

I add the copies of two letters, which make a great noise at Paris, and which are authentic.

I am, with the most profound respect, fire, &c.

* *Tous les climats se sont ressemblés.* There is reason to suppose an error of the press, and that instead of *climats* the word should be *frimats*; i. e. every kind of cold. Every kind of climate would include heat and fine weather. T.

L E T T E R XXII.

From the King.

May 13, 1754.

I AM very much obliged to you, my good D'Arget, for the trouble you have taken concerning my theatre, and have no doubt but your pious intentions toward it will be the harbingers of good fortune.

You will laugh, in despite of your hypochondria, to be told that I have received letters from Maupertuis and Voltaire on the same day, filled with abuse on each other. They suppose me to be a common sewer, into which they may empty all their filth. I have written a laconic answer to the poet, and have satisfied myself with making the mathematician recollect that his understanding departs from the centre of gravity, whenever he hears the name of Voltaire.

I thank Heaven that my passions are not so warm as those of these people, otherwise I should be at war all my life. The phlegm of our good Germans, say what you will, is more sociable than the petulance of your wits. It is true, according to your own confession, that we are dull and heavy; and that we have the misfortune to have good sense. But, were you to

choose a friend, where would you fix your choice ? Wit, my dear D'Arget, is only paint, which conceals the deformity of the features ; but less splendid good sense, from its very propriety, leads to virtue ; and without virtue men could not associate.

But I ought not to sermonize with your spleen ; neither would I, did I not know you are in a country in which you may procure all that dissipation which can puff away the fumes of my morality.

Adieu, my dear D'Arget, * * * * *
and be merry : you have nothing else to do in this world.

FREDREIC.

LETTER XXIII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE,

Vincennes, June 10, 1754.

I OWN I could not have thought that your majesty could still have been disturbed, by the quarrel between messieurs de Maupertuis and de Voltaire. This unfortunate dispute has continued but too long. My spleen could not resist a laugh at the observation of your ma-

H h 4

jesty,

jeſty, in which you have ſo agreeably ſaid—
“ Theſe gentlemen ſuppoſe you to be a com-
“ mon ſewer, into which they may empty all
“ their filth.” By this expreſſion I perceive
your majeſty is not, nor ever has been, *diſturbed*
by ſuch contentions; but that you have felt as
became the ſuperiority of your genius and your
rank. And this is a truth the demonſtration
of which is ſo far from being indifferent, here,
to your perſonal glory, that I have ventured to
indulge myſelf in the indiſcretion of imparting,
to ſome perſons who are intereſted in whatever
affects your majeſty, that which you have had
the goodneſs to write to me on this ſubject.

What you afterward add is another proof of
that which I have remarked, with ſo much
pleaſure, concerning your character. The fol-
lowing is the paſſage; nor can you but be
pleaſed ſure, to read that which you have ſo well
expreſſed. “ Wit is only paint, which con-
“ ceals the deformity of the features; but leſs
“ ſplendid good ſenſe, from its very propriety,
“ leads to virtue; and without virtue men
“ could not aſſociate.” Theſe are touches
which depict the heart of your majeſty; and
ſociety gains, by becoming acquainted with
hearts like yours. For this reaſon, theſe ex-
preſſions affected thoſe to whom I ſhewed them,
and

and who were capable of loving the man in the great king. I have been told that your thoughts had reached the ear of M. de Maupertuis, and that he had been exceedingly disturbed by them; but this no doubt is an act of ridicule gratuitously imputed to him; and he ought to be pleased, from the attachment which I know he bears to your majesty, that you publicly appear no farther to interest yourself, in his quarrel, than perhaps as he himself ought to be interested; that is for your amusement. He would then grant his enemy peace, according to your majesty's example.

I thought it incumbent, on the respectful confidence which I have devoted to your majesty, to render you an account of my conduct, which might otherwise so be interpreted to you, as to deprive me of your favour, for which I never should be consoled. My intentions are upright, and have always been guided by my attachment to your majesty; and I will venture to say this motive must induce your majesty to pardon errors which zeal too ardent might occasion me to commit. Yet, can it be a crime to make society acquainted with your qualities?

Your majesty still recollects the pleasant trap in which you caught me one day, on the subject of the Germans. So far am I from disputing
the

the security of being acquainted with them that I loudly, and daily, proclaim I never suffered the least vexation, which was occasioned me by their means, with your majesty ; and that all the chagrin I may have met with was effected by the French, and the nation of wits, who never could forgive me for behaving less like a lunatic than themselves. This, precisely, was the only species of pain I had to encounter in your majesty's service. Not all the pleasures of the country I inhabit will rob me of the recollection of your majesty's bounty, or of the sentiments of that most tender and respectful attachment which I owe to you, in the manner in which you deign to continue this bounty ; which I only can merit by the honesty of my heart ; and I dare protest to your majesty that this heart will ever be most devotedly yours. Condescend therefore continually to accept the homage it pays you.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

From the King.

July 29, 1754.

I RECEIVED your letter, my good D'Arget, after returning from the tour which I have made into Franconia, to visit my two sisters. Maupertuis is come back, and, what is very extraordinary, not a word yet has passed concerning Voltaire. Algarotti has taken flight, and has settled at Venice, where he has married a woman who, it is said, will bring him wealth. Thus is our company broken up, and you gentlemen will make me begin house-keeping anew, in my own despite. If you see Valori, give my compliments to him.

I am now going to Sans-Souci, where I shall peaceably take the waters, without hearing of the quarrels of fanatics, the remonstrances of parliaments, or the envious intrigues of wits.

Adieu, my good D'Arget; I wish you ease and cheerfulness, but especially * * * * *

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE,

Vincennes, August 3, 1754.

THE goodness of your majesty has induced you to wish me health, and cheerfulness; but the latter is only to be found at Potsdam; and with respect to ease, I might have enjoyed more there than in any other part of the world, had I possessed health, and not had a son. But to these is sacrificed the happiness of my life; which, from my attachment to you, would be to find myself at your feet; and the recollection of those moments, when such was my situation, will always disturb my repose, amid even the pleasures which may be tasted at Paris, should I ever be wealthy enough to procure such pleasures. But of this I have great reason to doubt, if the protection and support of your majesty should not prevail on the ministry to do something for me. On this my hopes are placed, and I continually flatter myself that your majesty, who has deigned to give me your promise, will not refuse to realize those hopes, whenever an opportunity shall offer.

M. de Voltaire is still at Plombieres, where his nieces have been to visit him, and it is not known

known where he will go afterward. His stay at the abbey of Senonne, with the celebrated *Don Calmet*, had given rise to many ridiculous reports, concerning his pretended conversion. But he has sent several articles exceedingly well written to M. D'Alembert, for the *Encyclopedie*, and has added a letter, the contents of which do not depict a man subdued by prejudices.

I first heard of the marriage of count Algarotti from your majesty, in whom you have lost a very agreeable man. Should your majesty think like me, you will begin house-keeping anew (an expression which you yourself have obligingly deigned to use) with great regret.

The letter which I have received, from the abbé de Prades, very much afflicted me at first, from the fear I was in lest the edition of your works should be lost, or mislaid, which might very much disturb your majesty. But where is the probability that the whole edition could have been lost? I perfectly recollect that only a single copy, of the small quarto edition in question, was printed for your travelling library; which circumstance perhaps your majesty had forgotten. All the other large paper copies were very exactly secured, at the palace of Berlin, in the printing-office; agreeably to the notice which I sent of them, to the abbé de

Prades, the very moment after I received his letter. My fears, however, will not be entirely calmed till my conjectures shall be confirmed, which favour I expect from your majesty's bounty. You know how much a man, so melancholy as I am, may be affected, when his mind is disturbed.

I ardently wish that the waters, which you mean to take at Sans-Souci, may produce a salutary effect; then will the most fervent of my prayers be heard.

I cannot conclude without venturing to tell your majesty how generally two things, which you have lately done here, have been approved. I mean the nomination of the baron von Kniphausen for your ambaffador, and the favour which you have conferred on M. D'Alembert. I well know that the opinion of the vulgar does not influence your majesty; but, as madame de Sevigné said on the marriage of her son, it is still something when the public is satisfied.

May you long live, sire, to make others happy, and to be happy yourself. The marquis de Valori is exceedingly sensible of the honour of being remembered by your majesty, and very sincerely, and respectfully, throws himself at your feet.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XXVI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE,

Vincennes, October 5, 1754.

FROM your majesty only can I hope for fortune and happiness; and the opportunity is come when I may derive both from your bounty, and protection. These you have deigned to promise me, and on them I totally rely.

M. de Sechelles, who has been appointed comptroller general of the finances, and who, in that quality, distributes all solid and pecuniary favours, preserves all those sentiments for your majesty which he conceived at Prague, where he had the happiness to be personally known to you; and I am convinced he will eagerly seize every occasion of doing whatever may be agreeable to your majesty. My fortune will undoubtedly be made, should you deign to grant me a letter of recommendation to this minister, and, in this letter, be pleased to inform him of the particular kindness with which you honour me, and of the personal satisfaction you would feel should M. de Sechelles, in consideration of this, be good enough to bestow on me some advantageous

geous post, in any of the sub-departments of finance.

This favour would, to me, be complete victory; and I should owe to your majesty the power of being able freely, and tranquilly, to live wherever I should please, as well as a release from the tyranny of employment, which always becomes difficult and painful when the health is so much injured as mine is. I farther most respectfully entreat your majesty to inform the baron von Kniphausen of the protection which you shall deign to grant me, on this occasion; that he may be authorised to require it may be effectual, from the comptroller general. And, should your majesty not think proper to write to M. de Sechelles, which however you had the goodness to do several times, while I had the honour to be in your service, I venture to supplicate you would give orders to the baron von Kniphausen to present me to him, on your majesty's part, and to inform him of what I have been bold enough to entreat your majesty to write; and that you would have the goodness to speak, on the subject, to the chevalier de la Touche.

But the letter of your majesty would be of far greater importance to me; and, as that favour would be more marked, I again venture most ardently

dently to request it, with the more hope that I shall be successful. Let your majesty be pleased to recollect that, by your recommendation, you made the fortune of the brother of M. de Maupertuis, and likewise that of the brother of M. de Chafot, who had not the happiness to be personally known to you ; and that, when you bestow a favour so great on me, your majesty will deign to reward an old servant, who has continually been devoted to you, and with whose services you have kindly been pleased not to appear dissatisfied. Nor will such a recommendation in the least be derogatory to your majesty. This I can solemnly protest, for it is customary for such favours to be only granted to the most powerful protection.

As the affairs of finance are treated on during the king's residence at Fontainebleau, I very much desire I might be able to go there, and present the letter which I expect, from the bounty of your majesty, with the most respectful confidence, &c.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXVII.

From the King.

Potfdam, October 19, 1754.

I RECEIVED your letter, dated the 5th of this month, and shall be glad if I can any way contribute to promote your fortune. To this effect I shall give orders to my ambaffador at Paris, baron von Kniphaufen, to present you to M. de Sechelles, and to recommend you, from me, as an old and good servant, in whom I met with zeal and attachment, and for whom I wish to have the obligation, to the said minister, of obtaining a good establishment in your own country. I have no doubt but this will produce a fortunate effect, which will give me the more pleasure as I shall be delighted to see you contented and happy.

FREDERIC.

LET.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

November 9, 1754.

I WAIT the execution of the orders which the baron von Kniphausen must have received from your majesty, such as you have deigned to announce them to me, in your letter of the 19th of October. Favours so marked must be productive of the most advantageous effects to me, especially if your majesty would but be pleased to speak a word to the chevalier de la Touche, that he may write accordingly to Paris. My fortune will be the work of your majesty, a work which I hope you will not abandon; as I also do that, should it be absolutely necessary for my success, your majesty will deign to grant me a letter personally addressed to M. de Sechelles. You know mankind, nor can you be ignorant how much these things become individually their own, and interesting to themselves, when they emanate from a great man, and a great king.

I only wish for this trifling good fortune that I may procure myself that freedom without which there is no true happiness, and of which

I shall make no other use than that of occasionally coming to lay my wishes, my very happiness, and my respectful gratitude, at your majesty's feet. This hope is the first of all my projects, and let me entreat your majesty not to destroy an idea by which I am animated and sustained.

I know the pleasure your majesty takes in the works of Lancret, and I here add an account of ten pictures, by this master, which I have prevailed on one of my friends to part with, should they happen to please your majesty. It is the opinion of every body that they are the most agreeable of the performances of this painter, as well for correctness of drawing as for the pleasuringness of the figures. Should your majesty think proper to send me any orders, on this subject, they shall be executed with all possible precision. The pictures are in such good condition, even to the very frames, that when they arrive they have only to be hung in their places.

M. de Voltaire is still in Alsatia with his niece Madame Denis. His *Rome Sauvée** will be revived this winter. It is expected the Triumvirate of Crebillon will be played, when the court returns from Fontainebleau, concerning the success of which opinions are divided. The

* Rome Saved.

players think very highly of it; and, what is very certain, and which could not happen in any other country, is that, all the boxes were taken for the first nights of the performance of this tragedy, before the parts were distributed to the actors.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXIX.

From the King.

Potsdam, December 14, 1754.

I CANNOT comply with the request of your last letter; beside that I think it would be to no purpose, since M. de Sechelles will easily perceive that I interest myself in your favour, as soon as you shall be presented by my minister.

With respect to the pictures, I can only inform you that I have no longer the same taste; or rather that I have enough of that kind. At present I willingly buy the works of Rubens, of Vandyck, or in a word the pictures of the great painters, both of the Flemish and the French school. Should you know of any one to sell, you will give me pleasure by sending me notice.

My sentiments respecting yourself are always

the same, and you may rest persuaded I will do you service whenever I can.

FREDERIC.

P. S. Do not wonder at the manner in which this letter is scrawled, for my secretary is one of the cats of the Sorbonne.

L E T T E R X X X.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

December 24, 1754.

I HAVE been presented to M. de Sechelles; and he paid every proper attention to the respectable recommendation of your majesty. I hope it will produce a salutary effect, which I have every reason to suppose, especially if the baron von Kniphausen will but occasionally remind the comptroller-general. I request, as a favour, that your majesty would be pleased to recommend this to him; and likewise to have the extreme goodness to speak a word on the subject to the chevalier de la Touche. Whatever leads to good fortune, even in an inferior degree, is so prodigiously struggled for, in this country, that nothing can prevail but the force of protection; and I have every reason in the world

world to hope that, honoured as I am by that of your majesty, the modest demands I propose to make will not be refused. How happy shall I be, attached by sentiment as I am to your majesty, to be indebted for my easy circumstances to your support and favour!

M. de Voltaire has been at Lyons, where he was when the duc de Richelieu happened to pass through the city. He went and paid his court to madame la M * * *, † by whom he was coldly received. He has been but little countenanced by the great, feared by individuals, and extremely praised by the people. It was supposed he would wait the return of the duc de Richelieu, which will be on the 10th of January, but he departed on the 10th of the present month, when he was least expected so to do, still accompanied by madame Denis; and is gone to reside at the seat of Prangin, in the country of Vaux, under the government of Bern, situated on the lake, six leagues from Geneva. The house, which is exceedingly fine and in the most beautiful situation, has been lent him by the owner; and it is thought, at Lyons, that this motive of œconomy did not a little contribute to his departure. He has said that he intends

† *Madame la Marechale*, as I suppose; that is, the dutchess of Richelieu. T.

to go to the baths of Aix la Chapelle, which is doubted. He is at present publishing a new edition of his Universal History, at Geneva; and, it is affirmed, there is great reason to suppose the Maid of Orleans must soon appear. He does not attempt to dissemble that he must be eternally banished from France, should that work become public. He amused himself, at Lyons, by making * the players act some of his tragedies.

The Triumvirate of Crebillon was yesterday represented for the first time, and with very great success. This blow will be sensibly felt by Voltaire. It is said that he has written the Death of Cicero on the same plan.

The discourse which M. D'Alembert pronounced, on the 19th of this month, when he was received a member of the French academy, was universally applauded and was written so to be. He has spoken of your majesty as all people think.

The new year is approaching, and I dare flatter myself your majesty will permit me, on this occasion, to renew the assurances of the prayers which I make, and ever shall make during life, for your health; they are but the consequence

* *A faire jouer*—By teaching them to act, I imagine, is what M. d'Arget meant to say. T.

of my respectful gratitude and devotion to your majesty. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE,

March 12, 1755.

THE sieur Petit has no doubt sent your majesty the catalogue of the pictures of M. Pasquier, formerly deputy of the trade of Normandy, and who had made a select collection of the different schools. These paintings are soon to be on sale. One of the most conspicuous of them is the Leda of Corregio, from the cabinet of the regent, and which the late duke of Orleans piously cut in four, the parts of which were fortunately saved from the fire by Coypel, the head excepted, which he could not protect. The parts he put together again, and the head was restored by De Lien. This picture, so beautiful in itself, and so famous for its adventures, will, it is said, be sold at not less than twenty-five thousand livres. (Upwards of a thousand pounds sterling.) It is about six feet high, and five wide, and would make a magnificent appearance in the gallery preparing by your majesty.

I

Voltaire,

Voltaire has at length determined between Geneva and Rome*. He has lately caused Cramer, his bookseller, to purchase a fine estate, with an excellent house, on the Lake of Geneva, for which he has paid eighty-seven thousand two hundred livres. (Near four thousand pounds sterling.) He has advanced the money, and Cramer has sold it to him, for life, for forty thousand livres. (Almost seventeen hundred pounds.) He is now making a complete edition of his Universal History, in five volumes. He seems determined to fix his residence in that country, with madame Denis. They have both sent for all their furniture and their books. The following are some verses which he wrote on the city of Lyons :

*Il est vrai que Plutus est au rang de vos dieux,
Et ce n'est pas tant pis, pour votre aimable ville ;
Il n'a point de plus bel asile :
Ailleurs il est aveugle, il a chez vous des yeux ;
Il n'étoit autrefois que dieu de la richesse,
Vous en faites le dieu des arts ;
J'ai vu couler, dans vos remparts,
Les ondes du Pactole, et les eaux du Permesse †.*

* Meaning between Calvin and the Pope. T.

† Plutus, it is true, is one of your gods, nor is he injurious to your charming city ; nowhere has he a more delightful temple : in other places he is blind, but not so here ; formerly he was only the god of riches, you have made him the god of arts, and the mingled waters of Pactolus and Hippocrène flow round your walls.

M. de Fontenelle has been in danger of death, but has recovered; and, although he is ninety-nine, he dines out every day, as he has done all his life. His mind is continually cheerful, and he is indebted for this to the tranquillity of his character. It is but three years since he wrote the following impromptu :

*Heureux qui ne connoît que ce drôle, immodeste,
Qui du sexe est toujours vainqueur.
On sait où le mettre de reste,
On ne sait où placer son cœur*.*

This is such a pleasant manner of philosophising, at ninety-nine, that I flatter myself your majesty will pardon my having sent you these waggish verses.

The French academicians are successfully performing the tragedy of Philoctetes, written by M. de Chateaubrun, author of the Trojans, which was performed a year ago. The characters of Ulysses and Philoctetes are happily depicted, after Homer. The work contains many

* "Happy is the man who is ignorant of all, except of
"that immodest young rogue who always conquers the fair.
"We know how to dispose of every thing but our affections."
The wit of these lines is of that kind which has induced me rather to let the spirit of them evaporate than to give it in its full force. T.

well-

well-written lines, and admirable maxims. . A financier the other day observed of this piece—
“ It is very fine, but I am still better pleased
“ with the *Sophocles* of *Euripides*.”—The wits
say this tragedy is the Quatrains of Pibrac dramatized. I have not yet seen it. I am detained here by a gouty humour, which is added to my other infirmities. Sorrowful experience teaches me to admire, much more than I formerly did, the tranquillity with which I have seen your majesty suffer the pangs of that cruel disease. May you long be preserved from them ! The winter is very tedious, and I am in continual apprehensions for your health, because of the kind of solitude to which you condemn yourself, during that season. Your majesty will graciously indulge an old servant, who is at all times with equal respect devoted to you, while he testifies his alarms and his wishes.

I am, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XXXII.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE,

July 8, 1755.

PEOPLE, who do not know all of which your majesty is capable, think that royalty never can go unattended ; yet has your majesty been travelling incognito through Holland ; while I have been at Liege, where I have consulted the most able physicians on my health, and of the benefits which I might expect to receive from the Spa waters. They have informed me that I could not take them, till I first should have undergone a six weeks or two months preparation, by regimen ; that I must afterward drink of the Sauveniere, during a month, which did not agree with my leave of absence, or the state of my finances. Beside, thanks to the infinite favour which you have deigned to testify for me, my content of mind and the motion of travelling have contributed to give me much better health than I had long before enjoyed ; and I determined to return slowly, having, so deliciously to my own heart, gratified the principal object of my journey.

I am eager again to throw myself at your majesty's feet, and to pay my most respectful
and,

and, if I may so be permitted to say, my most tender thanks, for the manner in which you were pleased to receive me. How great is my reward, for the true and sincere manner in which I am devoted to your majesty! I entreat you continually, with unabating bounty, to receive my professions and my homage.

I have every reason to hope that the new step which the baron von Kniphausen will take, in my favour, according to your majesty's orders, with M. de Sechelles, will be productive of the most fortunate success; and I once again protest to your majesty that I am not desirous of riches, except that I may occasionally be enabled to come and shew you the object of your own benefactions, and acquire new motives of love and admiration at your majesty's feet. This your majesty was kind enough to permit and promise, when you took leave of me at Wesel; and I conjure you never to revoke that favour.

I send your majesty a new epistle, by M. de Voltaire; and, while I send it, I wish it may have the merit of novelty. It contains some charming things, as do all his writings. He is excessively alarmed concerning his Maid of Orleans, copies of which are got abroad, and he trembles lest it should be printed. I found two letters from him here, on that subject; in
one

one of them, he tells me he has sent your majesty the son of Wilhelm, whom you wish to have for your copyist, and that he has paid his travelling expences. His letters are all kind and affectionate toward me, for he thinks he has need of me.

I have seen a cabinet of pictures at Liege, two or three of which deserve to be placed in the gallery of Sans Souci. I desired a catalogue might be sent me, without mentioning the use I intended to make of it, which I shall remit to your majesty; and, should any of the pictures suit your purpose, I have a person there who, when they are on sale, can purchase them, with all that circumspection which M. Mettra employs, on such subjects. I have already been active in the business which your majesty had the goodness to entrust to me, and you may be well assured it is and shall be attended to with all possible care, to your entire satisfaction, and likewise after the manner of M. Mettra.

I am, with most profound respect, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Vincennes, August 22, 1755.

I HAD the honour to write and speak to your majesty of the *Orphelin de la Chine* *, a new tragedy by M. de Voltaire, which was represented, for the first time, the day before yesterday, the 20th, and of which the best judges thus speak.

The opening of the plot is admirable, and the pathos is so strong that, were it, from the first act, progressively sustained, it would at last be insupportable. The third and fourth acts have less interest ; the fifth, like that of *Rome Sauvée*, is rather too hasty. But it is generally allowed that the play is superiorly written, that there are many lines which are maxims, all growing out of the subject ; and that it contains many of those particular beauties which seem peculiar to Voltaire. There are passages however which are too long, and which the persons who act for the author, M. D'Argental and others, will take upon themselves to retrench, for the second repre-

* The Orphan of China.

sentation.

mentation. But they dare not touch the lines that ought to connect the passages, so that tomorrow there will be several places in which there will be four lines in succession masculine, or feminine. The tyrant, Genghis Khan, is a character similar to that of the duke de Foix, which so much interested your majesty. The part of the princess is inimitable, as is La Clairon, by whom it is acted.

Such is what is generally thought on the subject. There have been some cabals among the actors, concerning parts demanded and refused, which have partially infected the public, but these were obliged to cede to the applauses of a most numerous and splendid audience.

There is a singular anecdote relative to the tragedy, which well proves the goodness of the author's judgment on such subjects. When it was read at the house of M. D'Argental, in the presence of some comedians, and men of letters and taste, it was allowed that it was necessary to change the fourth act; and the manner of changing it was agreed on before the departure of the poet. The author, who on his part had made the same reflections, sent the fourth act, with alterations corresponding to their remarks, as if he himself had been present when they were made.

• Marmontel, it is said, claims the plot; as
VOL. XII. K k being

being that of his Egyptus. Some of the situations are thought to be taken from Polyucte * and Athalie †; but, whether such charges be true or be not, every objection hitherto vanishes in presence of its beauties.

A sore throat, and rheumatic pains, which have, for a fortnight, made me keep my chamber, have prevented me from profiting by a seat, which had been reserved for me, in a box, more than a month, for the first representation.

The little stock of health which my extreme satisfaction, and the motion of travelling to Wesel, had procured me, was soon exhausted; and I am once again subject to the spleen, which is inseparable from a suffering state, in souls that have not the strength of that of your majesty. But the goodness of your heart engages you to pity that in others which, whenever you have occasion, you have the heroism to vanquish in yourself. I feel all the need I have had, and still have, of that goodness, and I request the continuation of it from your majesty, as a benefit.

The count de Gisors fell into the water, some days since, at Metz, and would have been drowned, had not a foldier, of the regiment of the Lorrain guards, jumped in to his aid. It would have been a pity that a man who, ac-

* A tragedy by Corneille.

† A tragedy by Racine.

cording to your majesty's own opinion, promises so fairly, should have thus unfortunately perished.

The Maid of Orleans is hawked about the streets in manuscript. It must certainly be printed; and the author testifies a degree of apprehension, which must greatly diminish his joy at the success of his Orphan.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Paris, November, 1755.

I HAD great need of the last letter which the abbé de Prades did me the honour to write, by order of your majesty. I entertained the most afflicting fears that I was no longer in your majesty's remembrance or favour; and my sorrow was very sincere, since I venture to say I love your majesty.

The Orphan of China has lost much of its value, by being printed: some of the verses are harsh, and others are scarcely French. Voltaire is indebted for the first success of his tragedy to the acting of Le Clairon.

The immodest Maid of Orleans, who has so long been secluded, is now public in every street ; and is offered for sale, at the price of two guineas, in various houses. The author has sent a copy to Thiriot, with numerous corrections; but that which your majesty possesses, is the true one. The dull veil of decency does not become this beauty.

It is asserted that the duc de Nivernois will depart at the end of the month. Your majesty is acquainted with his understanding, by several of his works : you are pleased with his prudence and modesty, which, as it is said, sometimes become timidity ; but your majesty knows that merit and high birth cannot always conquer this failing ; and your majesty unites in yourself too many of those qualities which inspire timidity, not to be disposed to excuse the failing.

From the public papers I learn all which your majesty has lately commanded to be done, of the agreeable and the splendid, at the festivals of Charlottenberg ; and I think I see you returning afterward, with delight, to your retreat at Potsdam. Such things affect me more than any other kind of reading. I continually place myself with great pleasure in situations which I so often see in idea, and which I as continually hope again actually to see. Such resources of
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the imagination are necessary, to impose on the real sufferings which I endure.

The general arrangement, which has lately been made in the finances, perhaps removes the effect of the promises of M. de Sechelles to a great distance, and my ill health renders my wants pressing. Let me conjure your majesty to deign to renew your powerful protection. A word to M. de Sechelles, in my favour, will prevail on him to give me a place in the farm of the post-offices, which is soon to be renewed.

But should your majesty not think proper to write directly yourself, though that would be decisive, I could wish you would be pleased to notice the subject to the marshal de Belleisle, or to write again to the baron von Kniphausen, or, in fine, to speak in an interesting and favourable manner to the duc de Nivernois. I tremble while I ask this favour of your majesty ; but my appeal is to the goodness of your heart. Should you deign to ascertain my fortune, and that of my son, which a word would do, I can venture to assure you it would not derogate from your dignity. This I hope from your infinite goodness to me, sire ; but the moment is pressing. The renewal of the post-farm will be in the course of the year, and it is of the utmost importance to me not to be anticipated. Should this business fail, which is a permanent and tran-

quill employment, and perhaps the only thing that suits me, all my hopes will be so far thrown back as to be almost annihilated; and, should I not be fortunate enough to obtain this favour from your majesty, let me not at least have to complain that you will not pardon me for having dared to make the request.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R XXXV.

From the King.

Potsdam, December 1, 1755.

I WISH I were able to do that for you which you ask; but you ought yourself to be sensible I could not speak on the business to the duc de Nivernois; and that marshal de Belleisle would be highly surpris'd should he receive a letter from me in which, instead of the language of a soldier, I should talk to him of the post-office farm. You likewise know I do not suffer any person to interfere in the interior administration of my provinces; and I am too just to ask that from others which I do not think right for them to ask of me. The services you have rendered me may authorise you to demand favours in my own country; but, if I am unable to reward you myself, I think it would be indecent of me to wish others to reward you. Make
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your request for any thing which immediately depends on myself, and you will find I never forget those who have been attached to me, and whom I have loved.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

From M. D'Arget.

SIRE,

Paris, November 21, 1755.

A MEMORIAL has been remitted to me, which I have imagined to be of sufficient importance to lay before your majesty. The manufacturing of soap, the thing in question, must be an interesting object in your majesty's states, where, I believe, it is not made. Should the plan proposed be agreeable to your majesty, I will refer the persons interested to your majesty's ministers, with them to discuss their mutual interests.

I here add the description of six pictures which have been proposed to me, and which are masterly performances in their kind. Should your majesty imagine they might please you, they shall be shewn to the baron von Kniphausen, who may settle the price with the owner, and who, till then, wishes to remain unknown. Notwithstanding the perfection of the workmanship, I fear the subjects are not to the taste of your

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majesty;

majesty ; and, if I am not mistaken, you do not take much pleasure in miniatures.

The Maid of Orleans is printed at Liege, and copies have clandestinely been conveyed hither. It is not a handsome edition, and is full of errors, as are all the manuscript copies which swarm in the world.

Your majesty will find the duc de Nivernois well informed, respecting our literature and literary anecdotes. He, as well as the marshal de Belleisle, and madame de Pompadour, are already all in my interest, merely from being told that I am an old servant of your majesty's, on whom you are sometimes pleased to think. What might I not hope, should your majesty deign to inform the duc de Nivernois that I am actually so fortunate as to be occasionally remembered by your majesty ! The suppression of the sub-farms has rendered the road to wealth so difficult that the weight of protection alone can ascertain success. The patronage of your majesty is my sole hope, and I venture to request a continuation of it, and its effects, with that respectful confidence in which you have been pleased to indulge me.

I am, with the most profound, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

From the King.

Potsdam, December 5, 1755.

I HAVE no doubt that the miniatures you mention are very beautiful ; I confess they are after the designs of a great master ; but I do not love this kind of painting, nor ever have loved it, as you know.

With respect to the soap manufactory, it is a proposal absolutely useless for Prussia. Soap is made in every town, and is very cheap ; neither ought you to forget how well your linen was washed here. I am not the less pleased with the zeal which you do not cease to testify toward me ; and be assured I shall at all times be happy, when circumstances will permit me to afford you marks of my good will.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

Paris, February 6, 1756.

TWO works which are equally sought after have appeared here, though hitherto very mysteriously.

mysteriously. The one is a poem, intitled *Le Plaisir* *, attributed to the duc de Nivernois, which I have not read, and which it is said corresponds to the delicacy of his taste and understanding. Of these your majesty, who is so good a judge, is at present able to make your own estimate.

The other is a work by M. de Voltaire; a poem, in four cantos, on natural religion, than which nothing better can be wished, either for the justness of the ideas or the goodness of the poetry. In fine, by the confession of the connoisseurs, it is the most beautiful and perfect performance that ever fell from his pen. As it is dedicated to your majesty, and as you are more than once cited in it, in proof of the principles there established, I have no doubt but that it has been sent you by the author. The work is not printed, nor is it even possible to obtain a copy.

I dare not speak to your majesty on a subject which, at this moment, is the conversation of all Europe. From every thing which I can perceive, I am more deeply interested than I am able to express. It is my fate to be of two countries; I am born a zealous citizen of the one, while eternal gratitude attaches me to the other; and I should find infinite satisfaction

* Pleasure.

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could I form wishes by which they should eternally be combined. An event by which they might be separated I never can forget; it will ever interest me most sensibly. I entreat your majesty to indulge this confession of that sincere and durable affection with which I am devoted to you.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 16, 1756.

I HAVE received your two letters, dated both on the same day, and containing the same things; except that in one you inform me of your alarms relative to the convention of London. But I am surprised that a man like you, accustomed to political business, should believe the reasonings of the vulgar to be facts. Be at peace; my convention will not disturb the good intelligence which I have hitherto maintained with France; and you may very safely with me prosperity, without betraying the interests of your country. I thank you however for the attachment which you continually denote for me * * * * *

my poor D'Arget, and fear nothing for Europe,

L E T.

L E T T E R XL.

From M. D'Arget.

S I R E,

March 2, 1756.

IF I ever received any mark of the infinite bounty of your majesty, it was assuredly in the manner in which you deigned to pardon the two letters which came to hand on the same day, and contained the same information concerning literature. The only need I have to justify such apparent thoughtlessness, which is so distant from the respect I have for your majesty, is to relate the truth with that frankness which you love, and which I owe you.

My alarms, relative to the convention of London, were derived from more pure and important sources than the conjectures of the public; and, as I remit this letter to Berlin in a safe manner, I venture to inform your majesty, there are no efforts which the common enemies of France and of your majesty have not made, on that occasion, absolutely to separate interests which, from their nature, ought to be for ever united; nor have there been any seductive means which have not industriously been employed to effect this purpose.

Not that these very enemies derive their dangerous arguments from the subject itself. It is almost universally allowed that your majesty has done what your interest no doubt required, for
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the present moment, by preserving that tranquillity in Germany which may so well aid the peace of Europe, at least so far as a continental war is concerned. Their efforts have been to embitter the minds of men relative to the form; and I repeat there is no licence in which these common enemies have not indulged themselves, that they might spread the most dangerous varnish over the mystery which your majesty has thought proper to observe, on that occasion, toward our court.

It was when these troubles were at their height, penetrated by the consequences which I saw the very persons who were most attached to your majesty drew, that I ventured to write to you, on the 6th of the last month, at my return from Versailles. But, as I perfectly perceived it did not become me to lay such considerations before your majesty, I sent the baron von Kniphausen my two letters, differently marked, observing to him what I had ventured to inform your majesty of, concerning present circumstances; and that, whatever might be my risk, by taking this liberty, my zeal obliged me to the act, while I thought it essential to the common interest that your majesty should be informed by others, as well as by the baron, of the impressions made on our court, at that moment. No person knows better than this ambassador how far, without betraying my country, I carry my affection for your majesty.

I had marked the letters differently, that he might himself judge, having made his own reflections, which ought to be sent, requiring the other might be burnt. It was no doubt some mistake of the person who made up the packet, which occasioned both of them to be sent to your majesty.

At present your majesty is informed of the truth of an affair which must appear so ridiculous as not to be excused, by goodness less than yours. Permit me, sire, to attribute this new testimony of your bounty to the knowledge which your majesty has of the real feelings of my heart, according to which I request the favour to be always judged by you, for they will never vary; and I entreat your majesty to relieve me from the fears which I feel, lest the freedom with which I acted on this occasion should have given you displeasure. At present you are informed that it was not the consequence of any ridiculous prejudice to my own advantage, but solely of my zeal and attachment to your majesty, and to my country.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XLI.

From the King.

Potsdam, March 23, 1756.

BY your letter of the second of this month I perceive, with great pleasure, the sentiments
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of zeal and attachment which you have testified for me, and the eagerness you still possess of affording me convincing proofs of their reality. The singular things, on which you have touched, are too nearly related to my interest not to thank you for the information you have thought proper to send. You have been guilty of no error, by remitting two letters, both of which equally gave me pleasure. Be assured that my mode of thinking, relative to yourself, will never be capable of change.

I have enemies enough, my good D'Arget, but I fear them not * * * * *

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XLII.

From the King.

Berlin, April 2, 1763.

I THANK you for the part you take in the peace, which has lately been concluded; the good wishes you have sent me on that occasion are the language of your heart, and to which you may be certain I am not insensible, &c.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XLIII.

From the King.

Berlin, January 7, 1768.

I RECEIVED your letter, and thank you for your good wishes, which I believe to

be sincere. I hope you will live in good health, and that you will preserve your sight. You lose your teeth and I have no better fortune with mine. Every thing which exists is liable to change. You ought therefore to act resolutely

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When we are old we must either determine to perish or to see ourselves die in detail. There is notwithstanding a manner of being happy, which is to enjoy imaginary youth, to abstract the mind from the body, and preserve its cheerfulness till the farce shall be over, strewing the last journey of life with flowers. This is what I wish you.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R XLIV.

From the King.

Potsdam, September 6, 1771.

I GRANT with pleasure the permission you request in your letter of the 16th of August last, that your son may present himself to me, during the residence which he intends to make in Prussia. Being acquainted with the father, I shall be equally happy to see the son, and you only have to address him to me.

FREDERIC.

*End of the Letters between FREDERIC II. and M. D'ARGET;
and of Volume the Twelfth.*



